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Dungeon

UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF THE Soul Pillars

The Adventure Path Continues

Putting the Bold in Kobold!

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FEATURING

Jesse Decker · Richard Pett · Rodney Thompson · Paul Looby

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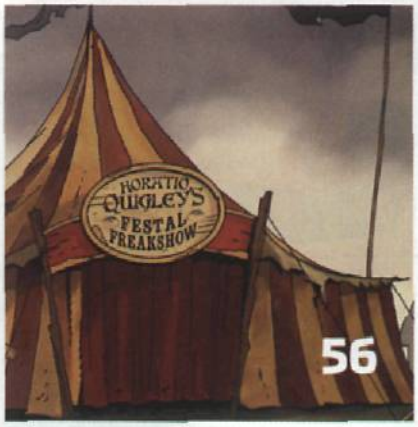
Dungeon

"During the three years I worked as a sword-swallower and fire-eater in a carnival side show, I lived and performed with freaks. A good freak would top every outfit on the midway, even the nude posing girls, and it's mighty hard to beat sex as an attraction."

—Daniel P. Mannix, *Freaks: We Who Are Not As Others*



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RPGA NETWORK

Dungeon Adventure Player Rewards!

Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon!* Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 5/30/04. Drop by www.rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:

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POLYHEDRON: *The Fascist Extremist Armed Revolution recalls the best villains 1980s cartoons had to offer.* Poly's *cover was drawn and colored by Andy Smith and Michael Atiyeh. Now you know. And knowing is half the battle. . .*

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Injecting Some Levity

I'll admit it. I'm a D&D junkie.

When I started as *Dungeon*'s newest mook (also known as an Associate Editor), I was playing in no fewer than six D&D campaigns. The only thing that's changed since then is that soon I'll be joining two more. Know what? Eight concurrent campaigns is an awful lot of gaming. And when all of them focus on adventures where you're expected to face off against the vilest of the vile in order to save the world, things can get a bit oppressive.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm as big a fan of mind flayers and necromancers as the next gamer, but I gotta say...it gets old real quick when everything in your character's life is doom and gloom; even more so when you multiply that gloom by eight. My eight campaigns certainly made one thing clear to me—the most overlooked aspect in gaming is humor.

Used inappropriately, humor can completely ruin a game. Used effectively, however, it not only lightens the mood, but it makes the nasty stuff all the more shocking when it pops up. So why isn't humor used more often in *Dungeon* adventures? Simple—it's very, very difficult to "write funny." As a co-worker here put it, "Humor has to be really funny to make you laugh—anything less just makes you angry."

So when I started reading Richard Pett's "The Devil Box," I was delighted. I was barely two pages into the manuscript before I started chortling, which of course meant I had to immediately stop what I was doing and explain what was funny to those nosy *Dragon* editors. As I got further into the adventure, I grew even more impressed. Here was a well-written adventure with plenty of humor that didn't undermine the plot. Indeed, the humor in the adventure really made Muddletude's Workhouse all the creepier when it showed up. Good times!

When I look back on games past, it's the funny stuff that I seem to remember best. Another player often keeps track of humorous or strange (mostly strange) quotes that pop up during play. Most of them are too bizarre to understand out of context, and most of those are far too foul-mouthed to see print anywhere but the Internet. Still, I managed to track down a couple of them so you can see what I'm talking about...

"You do have a cohort slot open. Tell the new guy his first job is to bury the last cohort."

"What the hell? A gibbering mouther vampire? How do you kill it? Put a stake in its heart? It doesn't have one! Stuff its mouth with holy wafers? No one has that many wafers!"

"You see a dragon who's so ancient and powerful that his size is measured in cubits."

"Two words you never want the DM to say: 'I win'."

Actually, never mind that last quote there. That one's actually pretty scary.

James Jacobs
dungeon@paizo.com

Dungeon
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April 2004

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PRISON MAIL

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Welcome Back!

It's been a long time since I picked up a copy of *Dungeon*. I suppose I was a little frightened of the changes involved with switching publishers, and I admit that I read a lot of bad press online concerning the new path that magazine was taking. I took a chance on issue #106, however, and I have a few comments.

First of all, I love the two adventures; both are well-written and original.

Secondly, only two? What happened? I think I prefer four to six shorter adventures to two longer ones. Is the magazine shrinking? Even if delivered on a monthly basis, two adventures per issues seems a little . . . short.

Thirdly, I suggest saving money by going back to black-and-white interiors. Why color? Only the DM ever sees the adventures, so color maps seem pointless. I'm sure it's more pleasing to the consumer when they thumb through the magazine and see vivid color images, but honestly, it's all about how the games play, rather than how they appear on the printed page. I have no business sense whatsoever, admittedly. But it just seems to me that the publisher would have a much reduced production cost if the interior was black and white, while the content of the adventures—the stuff that really matters—would not suffer at all. And if you reduce costs, you could expand the magazine to include more than two adventures and a couple of "critical threats."

I will always have a special love for *Dungeon*. It was my first paid writing gig. Though I have never really gotten much use out of *Dragon*, the pages of *Dungeon* have added tremendously to my home campaign. I wish you all the best with your future issues.

Lance Hawvermale
Via Email

First, we loved the adventures in Dungeon *#106, too. Thanks for letting us know what you think.*

Secondly, we're working on some plans to include more adventures in the magazine, but all of the possible scenarios involve some trade-offs, the most obvious being that the adventures won't quite be the 30-page beasts we've been running recently. Based on reader feedback, that'll make some folks beam with pride and make others a little steamed. We'll let you know when we think we've hit the right formula (and we're sure the readers will let us know how they think we're doing).

Thirdly, there are lots of things we could do to cut the cost of the magazine. We could pay our authors and artists less, switch to cheaper paper, and yes, go back to black and white. But there's a point of diminishing returns to that type of cost-cutting. If the magazine doesn't seem exciting to the casual buyer on the newsstand, there won't be any pages on which to print black and white maps. There won't be any pages at all, actually.

Still No Venger?

I've been a subscriber for several years. I want to first compliment you on excellent magazines with high production value, great utility, and fun adventures. Many thanks also to the artists whose work graces the covers and the various articles inside each month. I haven't written in a long time, but there were a few thoughts I wanted to share in light of some great additions I've seen.

I loved reading the *Incursion* series of articles in Dragon #309 and *Dungeon* #100. The githyanki are just too cool. This is the kind of thing that really gives a lot of bang for the buck. It takes a race and really gives them some depth and character and provides a backdrop to place on top of almost any existing campaign. I think that the githyanki scouts will be making an appearance within a few months in my current campaign.

One recent item of particular interest was the addition of Warduke as a Critical Threat in *Dungeon* #105. He's awesome and even more evil than I could have hoped. What a great villain he'll make. I also greatly enjoyed reading about Evard in *Dungeon* #107. I'd love to see more spells of his included in future articles. Both of these great NPCs beg me to ask the question: is there any chance we'll be seeing some of the other classic characters of yesteryear's D&D cartoon and toys? Characters like the wizard Kelek, the evil Venger, the noble Strongheart and others (heck, just about any of the main characters presented in the *Shady Dragon Inn* accessory) would be great to see!

A recent article from *Dragon* #315 that I loved was "Return to the Lost City," an update of the classic beast Zargon from the old adventure module *The Lost City*. It was great to see a unique monster like that updated.

I've been using older D&D modules with 3rd Edition for a while now, and while many of the monsters can just be replaced with their modern *Monster Manual* equivalent, some of the unique creatures are a bit trickier and take more time. I'd love to see more articles in which you take a classic module, present the main villains (and/or other NPCs) in their 3.5 version, maybe speak to changes that have occurred, and present various scenarios/hooks that can

Getting in Touch with Dungeon

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Letters to the Editor should be emailed to dungeon@paizo.com or polyhedron@paizo.com or mailed to Prison Mail, Paizo Publishing, 3245 146th Pl SE Ste 110, Bellevue WA 98007-6481. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Submissions: Interested in writing for the magazine? Download our submission guidelines by visiting the ***Dungeon*** homepage at www.paizo.com/dungeon.

be used with them. I think a lot of us long time players with shelves of old modules would really appreciate this.

Now to get back to some gaming...

James J. Zecca
Via Email

Thanks for the kind words, James! As we've said before, we've got no plans to resurrect any other "cartoon era" characters in our "Critical Threats" column, but we have been working on some names familiar to all D&D players. While we can't promise Strongheart and Uni, how do folks feel about the likes of Tenser or Melf?

It's funny you mention revisiting classic adventures, as that's exactly what we're planning to do with our blockbuster D&D 30th Anniversary issue. Dungeon *#112 will contain a 3.5-updated version of Maure Castle, the classic First Edition dungeon that first appeared in 1986's* Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure, *by Gary Gygax and Robert J. Kuntz. We've even managed to get Rob to design a never-before revealed fourth level below the infamous dungeon. We're absolutely thrilled to be working with Rob and Gary. Those of you who have not yet ventured past the Unopenable Doors to do battle with the demon-handed Eli Tomorast and the fiend-lord Kerzit are in for a treat that's been 30 years in the making!*

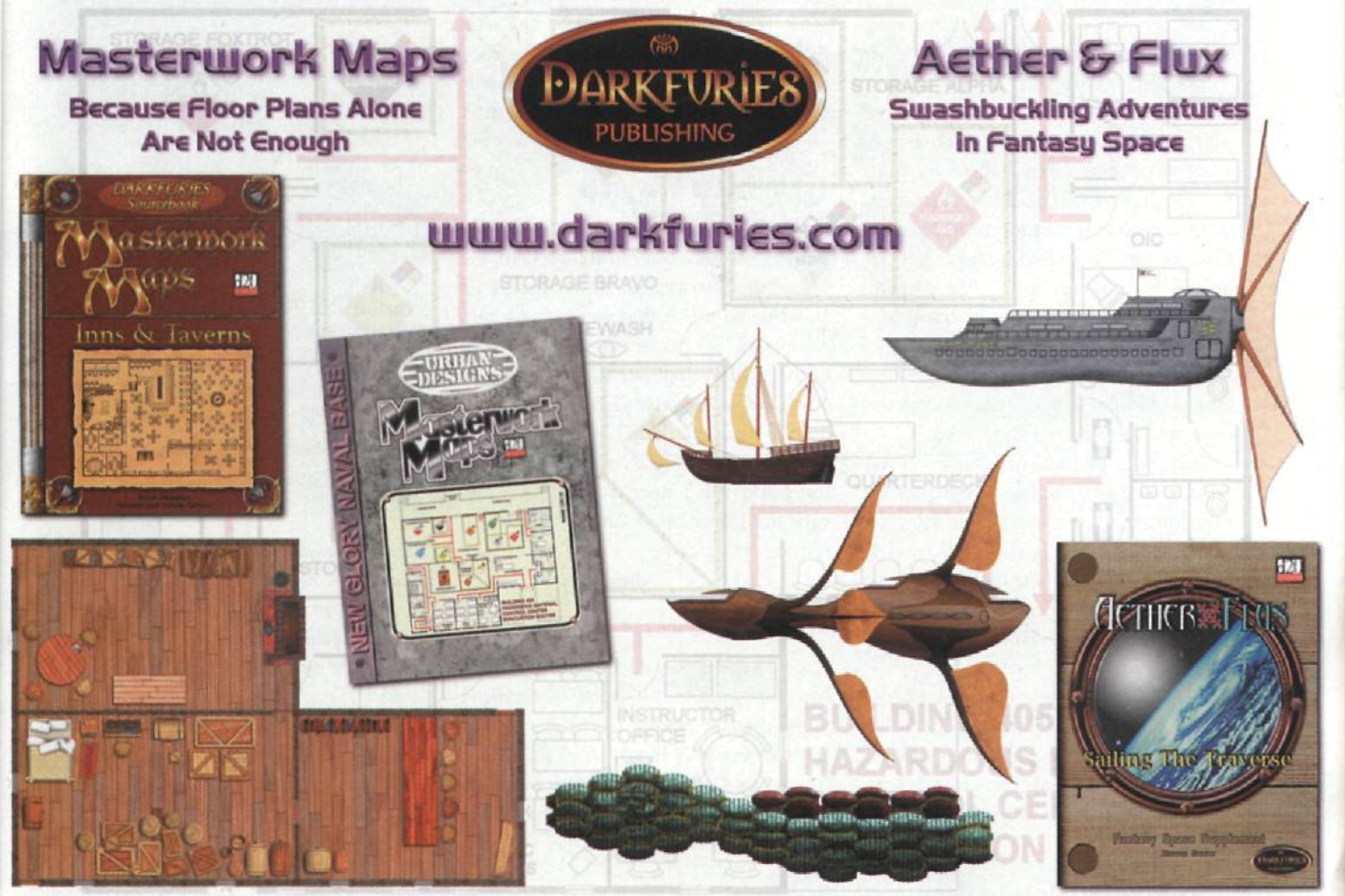
Put the Dungeon Back in *Dungeon!*

This morning I finally subscribed to the magazine, and since I signed up for three years, I'm going to need to give you my opinions. I have purchased *Dungeon* religiously since #83, and have a smattering of older issues (back to #24). Although you assure us that page counts have remained the same, I feel like I've been getting less for my gaming dollar each month. Or, between outstanding issues we receive 2 or 3 mediocre ones. I know that you're limited to presenting the content that you receive, but I for one would like more adventures.

The Maps of Mystery are great, but I would love to be able to download them and print them out (I save every magazine, and using them at the gaming table can be very damaging). However, I think the Critical Threats could be vastly improved. For example, in issue #106 you've included a Critical Threat that is completely tied into the Greyhawk setting. I'd rather see a more generic critical threat, and then perhaps a sidebar offering a way to tie it into one of the supported campaign worlds.

Four seems to be the magic number when it comes to adventures per issue. I suppose I would like one low-level adventure, 2 mid-level adventures (one long, one short) and one higher-level adventure. I have played with many groups, so I use a lot more low-level adventures than high-level ones. But the mid-levels are where we like to play the most and they can be the most difficult to write. Interesting villains, and ways to use them, are what I look for most in an adventure.

I also would like to support others who have said they are frustrated by indications that something will be in the magazine, only to find that it has been pulled until next month, or for several months until you again have room for it. I'm not a big fan of *Polyhedron*. You've included some great



material, but I don't want it every month. I'd rather see *Polyhedron* as a quarterly addition to my magazine of adventures.

Thanks for taking the time to read and consider my comments and suggestions, and most importantly, thank you for trying to put out the best magazine your resources allow month after month.

Brett J. Andersen
Via Email

We certainly sympathize with readers leery of tearing maps out of the magazines, but placing Maps of Mystery online (as many readers have suggested) doesn't make us particularly comfortable. If readers can get the maps on a website, why do they need to buy the magazine? Perhaps the best solution is printing a disclaimer in the magazine that readers have the right to photocopy any maps for personal use only. Would that help?

Look for the number of adventures per issue to increase within the next five issues. We've got several long adventures to clear off our submission pile, but have been asking new authors to reign themselves in a bit more in order to provide a greater variety of adventures per issue.

Less is More

I just received your great adventure magazine in the mail today and I am impressed once again. Publishing two adventures to fit mid-level and high-level play must surely be hard work. I don't know what these other readers are doing besides playing D&D; playing four adventures a month is just too much gaming time for me. There is still rent to pay, follow-up gaming on my online website, chips and beer to pick up, and travel time to the game. All this takes time. Keep up the good work and the production of the largest modules in print today. Thank you guys, and keep up the good work.

Sean, your editorial in issue #106 was a fun read. I like undead as much as the next guy, but my players right now are shadow eaters and have found ways to smack down the zombies just too fast. As a DM, roleplaying a zillion zombies just is not fun anymore. However, the module has a great adventure hook.

As for online maps; the only maps your website needs to have are the player's version maps. DMs can copy or re-draw the maps they need before the game. Players are there to be surprised and impressed by the module and being presented with a ready map from the website would go a long way toward making this surprise section of the game come off without a hitch.

Prison Mail is very concerned in issue #106 with gobs of feedback about what to include in the magazine. Several items come to my mind. First, keep up the two adventures per issue format. It gives us large adventures from which to work. You also have been kind enough to include mid-level and high-level adventures. Please let us know several issues in advance when an epic-level adventure is forthcoming. I am itching to see what the pros can piece together. Next, stay away from solo adventures. Instead, perhaps an adventure for only two players?

And I close. Thank you all for a great magazine, and the only one outside *Playboy* to which I subscribe.

Tony Giannette
Via Email

Nice company we're keeping in your mailbox there, Tony. We'll be printing super-long adventures for the next few issues, but thereafter we're going to switch to a format friendlier to more adventures per issue. Never fear, however! We simply can't resist the urge to print a long adventure every once in a while, so ideally we'll be able to please both sides of the module length issue.

Which Way to Cauldron?

I am an avid FORGOTTEN REALMS fan, but I liked the Shackled City Adventure Path storyline so much that we started a new campaign. I can't seam to find where Cauldron is supposed to be located in Greyhawk. Can you tell me which kingdom it is located in? I purchased the *LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer* for info on the world. Do I need a different accessory for information on the lands surrounding Cauldron?

James K Thomsen
Via Email

Players wishing to set the Shackled City Adventure Path in the World of Greyhawk might consider placing Cauldron near the northwest border of Hex 77-U1 on the LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer *map. With this placement, Cauldron (and the nearby city of Sasserine) would have been established as a secure trade outpost by Sea Princes-aligned merchants about 150 years ago. When the expansion of the Keoish navy checked the ambitions of the Sea Princes 20 years later, the Cauldron/Sasserine colony was forced to survive in a hostile, isolated clime. In the ensuing years, they freed their slaves and abandoned their connection to their former patrons, embracing a culture and political identity all their own.*

DON'T MISS DUNGEON #110!

Dungeon provides the very best in official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventures every single month! Don't miss our next issue, a DARK SUN super-event sure to make history:

DM's Guide to Dark Sun

By David Noonan

Polyhedron provides a massive Mini-Game-sized guidebook to the treacherous world of DARK SUN, where barbaric races battle against ruthless enemies under the burning red rays of a dying sun. Our in-depth guide to the setting presents the creatures and history of the world, complementing the DARK SUN *Player's Guide* in *Dragon* #319!

Last Stand At Outpost Three

By David Noonan

The PCs find themselves besieged by marauding elves in a wilderness trading outpost. Can they organize a defense of Outpost Three against the elves and their sinister allies—and figure out why the elves attack night after night? A DARK SUN D&D adventure for 4th-level characters.

Buzz on the Bridge

By John Simcoe

The isolated halfling village of Lindley has a problem. The main supply route into town, a large covered bridge spanning a mountain chasm, has been infested by a hive of giant bees. The sheriff has already perished in an attempt to remove the vermin, so when the PCs arrive in town, mayor Dunleary Appletop pleads for their help. A D&D adventure for 3rd-level characters, featuring a miniatures-scale map.

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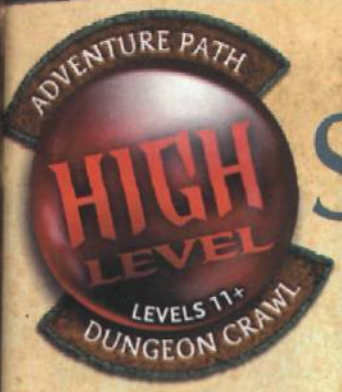


SECRETS of the SOUL PILLARS

BY JESSE DECKER

ARTWORK BY ANDREW HOU • CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

"Secrets of the Soul Pillars" begins with an assassination attempt targeted against the PCs at the request of Vhalantru, a powerful agent of evil and the behind-the-scenes ruler of the city of Cauldron. This adventure is designed for a group of four 12th-level characters; the PCs should reach 13th level during the adventure and approach the midpoint between 13th and 14th level by its conclusion. You can easily adjust the adventure for larger or smaller parties, as well as for PCs of higher or lower level (see the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar). When the PCs earn enough experience to gain a higher level, allow them to advance during the course of the adventure. Because the players spend most of their time in or beneath the city of Cauldron, opportunities to break from the course of the adventure to rest and recover, buy and sell magic items, or prepare for a specific encounter abound. The players are largely in control of the pace of play.

The adventure is part of the Shackled City Adventure Path that began with "Life's Bazaar" (*Dungeon* #97), "Flood Season" (*Dungeon* #98), "Zenith Trajectory" (*Dungeon* #102), "The Demonskar Legacy" (*Dungeon* #104), and "The Test of the Smoking Eye" (*Dungeon* #107). If you're playing through these adventures in sequence, the heroes are already familiar with the town of Cauldron and should recognize many of the NPCs mentioned in this adventure. If you make minor adjustments to the adventure, you can also play "Secrets of the Soul Pillars" as a stand-alone scenario. Although the adventure includes NPCs introduced in earlier installments of the Shackled City Adventure Path, it doesn't explicitly rely upon knowledge gained from the previous adventures.

PREPARATION

Running "Secrets of the Soul Pillars" requires the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*. Several monsters featured in this adventure appear in the *Fiend Folio*, but their statistics are given in full in the text. Access to previous "Adventure Path" episodes is useful, although "Secrets of the Soul Pillars" includes all the information that you need to run the adventure in the campaign's central city, Cauldron.

Before you run a game session of "Secrets of the Soul Pillars," take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the abilities of the NPCs and monsters in upcoming encounters. This adventure features a number of powerful undead creatures and spellcasters, some of whom use specific tactics to shift the battle in their favor. The better you know their capabilities, the better you can challenge the players at your table.

As in previous episodes of the campaign, Campaign Seed sidebars are scattered throughout the adventure. Some of these may be developed in future adventures in this series, while others serve as helpful points at which you can expand the adventure and make it your own.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The past year has not been kind to Cauldron, and the evil forces that have long simmered beneath its surface are nearly ready to openly claim control of the city. A powerful and greedy beholder named Vhalantru has long called the town home, charming the lord mayor, various nobles and prominent merchants, and members of the town guard as it suits his whims. Disguised as an influential noble, Vhalantru spent the last several years working with an evil organization called the Cagewrights. The Cagewrights wish to turn the city of Cauldron into a gate town with a permanent portal between the Material Plane and the prison plane of Carceri. If the Cagewrights are successful, an incarcerated horde of fiends trapped on Carceri's first layer can escape and ravage the town and a great swath of the surrounding area. Although not himself a Cagewright, Vhalantru has allied himself with their cause in exchange for promised lordship over the town once the portal is established.

One of Vhalantru's most successful ploys, both in terms of maintaining his hold on the city and in terms of aiding his Cagewright allies, has been the careful monitoring of any noteworthy adventuring groups resident in Cauldron. Knowing that the Cagewrights risk serious opposition from the forces of good should their plan come to light, Vhalantru has carefully manipulated the careers of most of the city's adventurers, including those of the PCs. Once

these adventurers have proven themselves capable, but before they reach a level of personal power that might allow them to challenge the beholder himself, Vhalantru arranges one of two fates: recruitment or death.

When the PCs embarked on their journey to the distant Abyssal layer of Occipitus (in "Test of the Smoking Eye," *Dungeon* #107), Vhalantru had already taken note of their achievements. Although he knew little of the group's destination or mission on the outer planes, his informants gave him enough information to let him assume that the group was headed on a doomed mission to the Abyss. When the PCs unexpectedly return victorious, Vhalantru knows that they must be dealt with immediately. Seldom one to dirty his own hands, he puts events into motion as soon as the PCs arrive, pitting some of the city's most powerful servants of Wee Jas against them. The Cathedral of Wee Jas itself has profited from its allegiance to Vhalantru, but of late has done little to aid his efforts. While the Cathedral's powerful high-priestess is away from the city on errands of her own, Vhalantru demands that its second in command, a cleric named Ike Iverson, destroy the adventurers.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Whether they return from their labors on Occipitus as described in "Test of the Smoking Eye" or from some other long and dangerous journey, the PCs arrive in Cauldron to find it greatly changed. Powerful contingents of mercenaries patrol the streets, keeping order in the name of Lord Orbius Vhalantru, the acting ruler of the city since the mayor's sudden absence. These mercenaries have succeeded at keeping order, but fear and suspicion grows with each passing week as the citizens gain no relief from the increased taxes. Rumor and speculation run wild through the city even as the mercenaries crack down viciously on any signs of trouble, ostensibly to prevent further riots (like the one the PCs encountered in "The Demonskar Legacy," *Dungeon* #104).

Before the characters have a chance to react to these changes, they find themselves beset by the growing malignancy within the city. Three well-trained and well-equipped assassins, enhanced by powerful magic, strike at the PCs. Should the heroes survive, some quick detective work and divinatory magic leads them to the Cathedral of Wee Jas. After dealing with its defenders, the characters discover a strange artifact. This is a *soulcage*, built by the Cathedral's leaders in alliance with the Cagewrights, and it yields clear clues that some dangerous and powerful conspiracy is at work within the city. Further research leads the group deep beneath the city to an ancient ruin made by spell weavers, an ancient race that made this region their home before disappearing forever several centuries ago. The enigmatic creatures built a horrific underground complex dedicated to researching a strange combination of necromancy and cold magic.

The complex is a great repository of powerful lore, but it is filled with horrors of its own. A powerful Cagewright loremaster still resides in the complex along with his undead servants, continuing the research that first led the Cagewrights to the *soulcages* and the gate ritual that their construction enables. Worse, the final chamber is guarded by a dracolich named Vittriss Bale. Once the characters have defeated these deadly guardians, they can study the strange lore preserved by the spell weaver's magic and learn of the Cagewrights' terrible plans.

CAULDRON

The town of Cauldron is detailed in the previous episodes of the Shackled City Adventure Path. If you don't have access to the other installments of the campaign, refer to the brief description presented below.

The city of Cauldron is built within the rim of a dormant volcano. Four concentric avenues ring a central lake, and the outer walls feature four main gates. The city buildings are built primarily out of volcanic rock and timber. Refer to the map of Cauldron for a list of important sites from this adventure and from previous ones.

Cauldron (large town): Conventional; AL LE; population 4,000 adults, 3,000 gp limit; Assets 600,000 gp;

THE STORY SO FAR

Powerful forces of evil have gathered in Cauldron, a town built in the crater of a dormant volcano and the PCs' base of operations. A sinister group known as the Cagewrights has long labored to turn Cauldron into a gateway city that directly connects the lower prison-plane of Carceri to the Material Plane. To open the gateway to Carceri, the Cagewrights must create artifacts called *soulcages*, each of which is fated to cage one of the Shackleborn—sacrificial victims doomed by an invisible birthmark.

In "Life's Bazaar" (*Dungeon* #97), the PCs rescue one of the Shackleborn, a young human boy, from Underdark slavers.

In "Flood Season" (*Dungeon* #98), the PCs recover several key magic wands from the Ebon Triad, a cult allied with the Cagewrights.

In "Zenith Trajectory" (*Dungeon* #102), the PCs are tricked into tracking down and returning another of the Shackleborn to Vhalantru's clutches.

In "The Demonskar Legacy" (*Dungeon* #104), the PCs track down the missing paladin Alek Tercival, only to become stranded in a strange land far from home.

In "Test of the Smoking Eye" (*Dungeon* #107), the PCs are recruited by a mysterious figure to undertake several grueling tests on the Abyssal layer of Occipitus, after which they set into motion the redemption of a fallen realm.

Mixed (77% human, 9% halfling, 5% gnome, 3% dwarf, 3% half-orc, 2% elf, 1% half-elf). Note that the half-orc population continues to grow while the overall population of the city shrinks.

Authority Figures: Lord Mayor Severen Navalant, male human Ari10 (missing), Lord Orbius Vhalantru, beholder (true overlord of Cauldron and acting authority while the lord mayor is missing), Terseon Skellerang, male human Ftr10 (captain of the town guard).

Important Characters: Jenya Urikas, female human Clr15 (cleric at the Church of St. Cuthbert); Meerthan Eliothorn, male half-elf Wiz14 (member of the Striders of Fharlanghn); Shensen Tesseril, female half-drow Mnk1/Brd1/Drd11 (member of the Striders of Fharlanghn); Fario Ellegoth male half-elf Ftr5/Rog5 (member of the Striders of Fharlanghn); Fellian Shard, male half-elf Rog3/Clr7—Fharlanghn (member of the Striders of Fharlanghn); Keygan Ghelve, male gnome Exp3/Wiz(Ill)2 (owner of Ghelve's Locks); Gretchyn Tashykk, female halfling Com1 (Lantern Street Orphanage headmistress); Vortimax Weer, male human Wiz10 (alchemist and potion brewer at Weer's Elixirs); Skie Aldersun, female gnome Sor6 (proprietor of Skie's Treasury); Phalian Gurnezarn, male human Exp6 (blacksmith and proprietor of Gurnezarn's Smithy); Bjellkir Zanathor, male human Com3 (proprietor of Zanathor's Provisions, a general store); Rivek Mol, male human Rog1/Exp4 (proprietor of the Tipped Tankard); Halpeen Welvihk, male human Exp6 (proprietor of The Drunken Morkoth Inn); Tippys Surefoot, female halfling Exp5 (proprietor of Sure Foot Livery); Kristof Jurgensen, male human Clr5 (cleric at the Shrine of Pelor); Embril Aloustinai, human female Wiz5/Clr9/Mystic Theurge 3 (high priest of the Cathedral of Wee Jas); Ike Iverson, human male Clr13 (cleric at the Cathedral of Wee Jas); Asfelkir Hranleurt, male half-orc Clr8 (high priest of the Temple of Lordly Might dedicated to Kord); Annah Taskerhill, human female Ari1/Brd10 (leader of the Stormblades, Cauldron nobility); Cora Lathenmire, human female Ari1/Ftr8/Duelist 2 (member of the Stormblades, Cauldron nobility); Todd Vanderboren, human male Ari1/Rog7/Asn3 (member of the Stormblades and adopted son of local nobles, currently deceased); Zachary Aslaxin II, human male Ari1/Rgr5/Clr5 (member of the Stormblades, Cauldron nobility); Artus Shemwick, human male Rog7 (fence and information broker working as a cook at the Tipped Tankard), Skylar Krewis, human male Ftr6 (sergeant in the town guard); Celeste, "human female," class unknown, (mysterious beautiful woman who's not actually a human at all, often found at the Cusp of Sunrise dinner club).

Typical Guard Patrol: Vhalantru made town patrols bigger and meaner over the course of spring with the introduction of half-orc mercenaries. A typical patrol now consists of a half-

orc sergeant (Ftr4), 1d8+2 human privates (War2), 1d6+2 half-orc fighters (Ftr2), and an ogre. Guards typically wear breastplates and bucklers emblazoned with the city's emblem (a watchful eye wreathed in flames) and carry halberds, longswords, and shortbows (all of masterwork quality). The sergeant carries two *potions of cure moderate wounds*.

Because of the emphasis on security, a special patrol filled with Vhalantru's most trusted mercenaries patrols the main avenues of the city. These special patrols consist of a human lieutenant (Ari6, a trusted member of the lord mayor's staff who has profited by Vhalantru's rise in power), two half-orc sergeants (Ftr4), 2d6+10 half-orc fighters (Ftr2), and either a human cleric of Wee Jas (Clr3) or a human wizard (Wiz3).

RUMORS IN CAULDRON

Even at its quietest, Cauldron is a city rife with rumors. Now that the troubles in Cauldron continue to escalate, though, its citizens have more on their mind than gossip. Those who remain in Cauldron have grown close-lipped with all but their most trusted friends, and when they speak of recent events, it is with an anger that wasn't present a year ago.

In many previous Adventure Path installments, a successful Gather Information check allowed the PCs to uncover numerous rumors about current events in town. These idyllic times are coming to an end. Now, a successful Gather Information check (DC 20) only gives the PCs sullen complaints about living conditions, rants about taxes, and fearful glances over the shoulder. Cauldron's citizens are likely to turn the tables on the PCs and press them for information or advice.

A more successful Gather Information check (DC 30) allows the PC to uncover an actual rumor from a nervous, cranky citizen.

d8 roll	Result
1	Many of the adventurers who used to call Cauldron home have moved on to bigger cities and richer prizes. (False. Over the past 10 years, Vhalantru has carefully manipulated most adventuring groups into taking on challenges too difficult for them, and that work has left Cauldron with a very low number of active adventurers.)
2	The Lord Mayor has journeyed to the larger city of Sasserine to petition their aid. (False. Vhalantru recently killed the Lord Mayor and spread many false rumors about the mayor's actual whereabouts.)
3	Lord Vhalantru's leadership is the only thing holding the city together. (True, although he's not the benevolent noble that most think him to be.)
4	The high taxes have driven many citizens out of the city. (True. The city's population has decreased by more than 500 adults because of the high taxes, strange events, and increasingly oppressive government.)
5	Embril Aloustinai, the high priestess of Wee Jas, fled the city in shame. (False. Embril left the city for reasons of her own, unknown to even her second in command, Ike Iverson.)
6	The Lord Mayor was assassinated by members of the Last Laugh thieves' guild. (False, Vhalantru killed the Lord Mayor and spread many false rumors about the mayor's actual whereabouts.)
7	A pair of young divers saw a huge monster in Crater Lake; they barely escaped before it saw them! They didn't get a good look at it, alas. (True. Two youths challenged each other to see who could dive deeper into the lake, and during the stunt they caught a glimpse of the advanced morkoth that lives at the bottom of the lake.)
8	Unholy blue lights have been seen flickering from the second-story windows of Ghelve's Locks; Ghelve has gotten into dangerous and evil magic. (Partially true. The blue lights have been seen in the windows, but Ghelve has merely been practicing his illusion magic.)

CHAPTER ONE: WELCOME BACK

The adventure begins when the characters return to Cauldron. Whether they return from adventures on the Abyssal layer known as Occipitus as described in "Test of the Smoking Eye" (*Dungeon* #107) or from some other journey depends upon the events of your campaign. If you are using this adventure without the other portions of the Shackled City Adventure Path, the adventure begins when the characters arrive in Cauldron for the first time.

As soon as the characters arrive in Cauldron, they draw the deadly attentions of Orbius Vhalantru. The beholder does not yet want to risk an open confrontation with the characters—he does not fear them (far from it), but his cover is too perfect to risk on the characters right now, and although he's confident that he and his minions could destroy them handily, the characters are powerful enough that one of them might escape with the news that the city's savior and current de facto leader is in fact a powerful beholder. Such news would be enough to draw the attention of powerful forces from the larger city of Sasserine, forces that Vhalantru cannot hope to confront before the successful completion of the Cagewrights' plan. And so he turns to the Cathedral of Wee Jas.

Embril Aloustinai, the high priestess of Wee Jas in Cauldron, is away from the city, leaving Ike in charge of the

temple and its dealings with Vhalantru and the Cagewrights. The temple of Wee Jas has been part of the alliance from the beginning, providing divine magic when needed and undead workers to handle the most basic aspects of the Cagewrights' efforts to build the *soulcages*. Despite these contributions, Vhalantru and the other Cagewright leaders know that the Cathedral has held back much of its strength, gathering influence and wealth from their dealings with the Cagewrights while risking little. Unwilling to let this continue, Vhalantru bullies Ike Iverson into coordinating the assassination attempt against the characters.

Ike reluctantly commits the Cathedral's resources to the task, knowing that without Embril in town to back him he dare not gainsay the will of Vhalantru and the other Cagewrights. Although Ike would rather not tangle with a group as successful as the characters have become, once he begins the process he commits the full might of the Cathedral to the task, including his own considerable spellcasting abilities. Through Vhalantru's agents, Ike possesses a great deal of information about the characters, and Ike himself has likely met them in the past.

Allow the characters to spend a few days learning of the growing tensions within the city and renewing contact with old friends. During this time Ike uses *scrying* on the PC with the lowest Will saving throw to gain a thorough understanding of their lodging, their security measures while in town, and their habits. Once he's had a few days to observe the characters, his assassins strike.

ASSASSINS (EL 14)

Light: Night.

Sound: None (the assassins move under the cover of a *silence* spell).

Reaction: Varies depending on the location of the ambush, but often none.

Auras: The auras in this encounter are listed by NPC:

- **Tulrak Gar-Hurk**: Faint abjuration (chain shirt, ring, *magic vestment, protection from energy*), faint transmutation (amulet, greatsword), faint conjuration (potion), moderate abjuration (*spell resistance*), moderate conjuration (ring), moderate transmutation (gauntlets, *air walk, greater magic weapon, heroes' feast, imbue with spell ability, mass bear's endurance, mass bull's strength*); faint evil.
- **Kennock Brage**: Faint abjuration (bracers, ring, *protection from energy*), faint conjuration (potion), faint transmutation (amulet, cloak), faint universal (rod), moderate abjuration (*spell resistance*), moderate transmutation (*air walk, heroes' feast, imbue with spell ability, mass bear's endurance, mass bull's strength*); faint evil.
- **Zaenna Quespin**: Faint abjuration (shield, studded leather, ring, *protection from energy*), faint conjuration

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Secrets of the Soul Pillars" is designed for a group of four 12th-level PCs, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 10th–11th or 13th–14th level characters.

10th–11th-level PCs: As long as a the party prepares carefully and rests fully after each major encounter, only the final encounter with the dracolich is really out of their reach. You'll want to make the following changes to specific encounters:

Assassins: The assassins still attack when the characters have let their guard down, but they no longer have the *lesser rods of silent spell* or use *silence* to stifle the characters' spellcasting. Reduce each assassin's level by one.

Interlude: Reduce Zarian Dhor's level by two, removing one level of fighter and one level of barbarian.

Temple of Wee Jas: Remove the stone giants from area **W1**, reduce the number of gray render zombies guarding Ike Iverson to three, replace the bone devil with an erinyes, and reduce Ike Iverson's level to 12.

The Ruins of Karran-Kural: On the first level, replace the ice devil with a barbed devil, and replace the iron golem with a stone golem. On the second level, replace the demodand with a hezrou demon, reduce Fetor's loremaster level by one, remove either Orgo or Xail from area **K14**, and reduce the dracolich's age category by one.

13th–14th-level PCs: To challenge higher-level characters, you can easily adjust the power level of most of the foes in this adventure by adding class levels to the NPC villains. You can also add a sense of urgency to the adventure, encouraging the characters to take on more than one encounter between rest periods. The easiest way to do this is to have Jenya Urikas receive a dire vision from St. Cuthbert that predicts Cauldron's fall within a month's time. The characters must push through both this adventure and the next one in the Adventure Path in one month of game time or the Cagewrights' plan comes to fruition. You'll want to make the following changes to specific encounters:

Assassins: If you increase Ike Iverson's level, make sure that the assassins receive the benefit of any additional spells that he might be able to cast to further increase their combat ability.

Interlude: Increase Zarian Dhor's level by two, adding one level of fighter and one level of barbarian.

Temple of Wee Jas: Advance the stone giants in area **W1** by 4–8 HD, replace the gray render zombies guarding Ike Iverson with bodaks, replace the bone devil with a barbed devil, and increase Ike Iverson's level to 14 or 15.

The Ruins of Karran-Kural: On the first level, replace the ice devil with a horned devil, and advance the iron golem by 4–8 HD. On the second level, advance the demodand by 2–4 HD, increase Fetor's loremaster level by one, increase Orgo's level by 1–2 and Xail's HD by 4–8, and advance the dracolich by 2 HD (advancing it by an age category makes it far too deadly a foe even for 15th-level characters).

(potion), faint transmutation (amulet, gloves, rapier), strong universal (rod), moderate abjuration (*spell resistance*), moderate transmutation (*air walk, heroes' feast, imbue with spell ability, mass bear's endurance, mass bull's strength*); faint evil.

The assassins attack the characters wherever they stay in Cauldron, preferably when they are gathered for an evening meal. If the characters are particularly vigilant, the assassins might have to cast their pre-combat spells further away from the group, reducing the amount of time that these crucial spells will be active (see the Tactics section below for more details on these spells).

None of the assassins know anything about the Cagewrights, Vhalantru's true nature, or the *soulcages*.

Creatures: Tulrak Gar-Hurk, Kennock Brage, and Zaenna Quespin have worked together for many years. Ike trusts their abilities and their discretion because of the trio's past dealings with the temple of Wee Jas. The three assassins are ruthless and efficient.

Ike Iverson casts several spells on the assassins before they make their attack. All spells are cast at 13th level, and their durations are long enough that none are in danger of expiring during the initial fight with the characters. If tracking the duration of the spells becomes an issue, assume that 2 minutes of each spell's duration has elapsed before the encounter begins.

Tulrak Gar-Hurk, Male Half-Orc Rog3/Ftr7: CR 10; Medium humanoid (half-orc); HD 3d6+7d10+30; hp 96; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9, Grp +17; Atk +22 melee (2d6+17/17–20, +3 *greatsword*); Full Atk +22/+17 melee (2d6+17/17–20, +3 *greatsword*); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, immune to fear, immune to poison, SR 25, trapfinding, trap sense +1, AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 26, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Appraise +6, Balance +3, Climb +20, Hide +7, Jump +22, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Spot +6, Tumble +7.

Feats: Blind Fight, Cleave, Dodge, Power Attack, Improved Critical (greatsword), Iron Will, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Languages: Common.

Imbued Spells (caster level 13, save DC 15 + spell level): 1—*cure light wounds, shield of faith*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds*.

Possessions: +1 *chain shirt* (+3 *chain shirt* with *magic vestment*), +1 *greatsword* (+3 *greatsword* with *greater magic weapon*), *gauntlets of ogre power, ring of protection* +1, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of counterspells* (*dispel magic*), *potion of cure serious wounds*, 250 gp.

Spells From Ike Iverson: The benefits of these spells are included in the statistics above: *air walk, greater magic weapon, heroes' feast, imbue with spell ability, magic vestment, mass bear's endurance, mass bull's strength, protection from*

energy (fire) (ignore first 120 points of fire damage), *spell resistance, status.*

Kennock Brage, Male Human Sor10: CR 10; Medium humanoid (human); HD 10d4+40; hp 76; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5, Grp +6; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA spells; SQ immune to fear, immune to poison, SR 25; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 20.

Skills: Bluff +18, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Intimidate +7, Concentration +17, Spellcraft +13.

Feats: Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Dagger, *bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +1, amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of charisma +2, lesser rod of silent spell, potion of cure serious wounds*, 250 gp.

Spells Known (6/8/7/7/6/4; save DC 15 + spell level); 0—*acid splash, arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, message, open/close, read magic*; 1st—*charm person, disguise self, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield*; 2nd—*knock, mirror image, see invisibility, scorching ray*; 3rd—*displacement, haste, lightning bolt**; 4th—*greater invisibility, ice storm*; 5th—*cone of cold**.

*Evocation spells. The save DC for these spells is 17 + spell level.

Familiar: Kennock has a raven familiar, but he knows how powerful the PCs are and does not expose it to the dangers of this encounter.

Spells From Ike Iverson: The benefits of these spells are included in the statistics above: *air walk, heroes' feast, mass bear's endurance, mass bull's strength, protection from energy (fire)* (ignore first 120 points of fire damage), *spell resistance, status.*

Zaenna Quespin, Female Human Rog3/Clr7 (Vecna): CR 10; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6+7d8+30; hp 84; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +7, Grp +11; Atk +16 melee (1d6+5/18–20, *+1 rapier*); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d6+5/18–20, *+1 rapier*); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, spells, immune to fear, immune to poison, SR 25, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +5, Concentration +10, Disable Device +6, Diplomacy +1, Disguise –1 (+1 acting), Hide +10, Intimidate +1, Jump +6, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +10, Search +6, Spellcraft +7, Spot +8, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks), Tumble +10.

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Languages: Common.

Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1, save DC 12 + spell level); 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *read magic, guidance*; 1st—*protection from good*[E]*, *cure light wounds* (2), *divine favor, obscuring mist, shield of faith*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, cure moderate wounds, death knell*[E], *desecrate*[E]*, *silence*; 3rd—*dispel magic**, *cure serious wounds, searing light*; 4th—*cure critical wounds, unholy blight*[E]*.

*Domain spell. [E]Evil Spell. *Domains*: Evil (cast Evil spells at +1 caster level), Magic (use magic items as 3rd-level wizard).

Possessions: *+1 studded leather* (*+3 studded leather* with *magic vestment*), *+1 light shield, +1 rapier, gloves of Dexterity +2, ring of protection +1, amulet of natural armor +1, lesser rod of silent spell, potion of cure serious wounds*, 250 gp.

Spells From Ike Iverson: The benefits of these spells are included in the statistics above: *air walk, heroes' feast, magic vestment, mass bear's endurance, mass bull's strength, protection from energy (fire)* (ignore first 120 points of fire damage), *spell resistance, status.*

Tactics: Zaenna and Tulrak each cast *divine favor* before the fight begins, while Kennock casts *greater invisibility* on himself. Then Kennock casts *haste* on the group and Zaenna casts *silence* on a small pebble that Tulrak carries. The three burst in on the PCs, maneuvering to keep PC spellcasters within the radius of the *silence* spell. Kennock and Zaenna make liberal use of their *lesser metamagic rods of silent spell*. All three concentrate their attacks on the primary spellcasters among the characters, hoping to drop them quickly and discard the rock with the *silence* spell. This allows them to capitalize on the advantage of their metamagic rods, and then bring their spells to bear against the non-spellcasters in the adventuring group. In particular, the three strive to bring down any divine spellcasters quickly, knowing that if they cripple the character's access to healing magic the fight is much more likely to go in their favor.

Development: Although the assassins have been paid well, they refuse to throw their lives away foolishly. If one or more of their number drops, the remaining two flee unless they have a good chance or destroying the remaining characters quickly. If any assassins flee, they take refuge in the temple of Wee Jas and confront the characters there in the company of Ike Iverson.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Because the assassins have the advantage of being prepared for the fight against the players and the benefit of numerous spells from a powerful cleric, award 150% the normal amount of experience points for this fight.

INVESTIGATION

After the assassination attempt, the characters should undertake a brief investigation to discover who ordered the attack on them. Ike Iverson was careful in selecting the best assassins he could buy and did not stint on using his own spells to increase their chances of success. Despite his diligence, Ike succumbs to his own arrogance in one sense: he does little to cover his involvement with the assassins. Although they pose a serious threat to the characters, if

they survive it should be relatively easy to trace the attack to the temple of Wee Jas.

As the PCs get into their investigations, it's important that you make the players feel almost as if they have free run of Cauldron, and that their knowledge of the city proves useful. The information in this section describes the actions of the most prominent and trusted NPCs that the players are likely to contact, but assumes that the PCs already know who it is they need to talk to.

If you've never run an adventure in Cauldron before, this section gives you an overview of where the characters can turn for help and information during the course of this adventure. You can allow PCs Gather Information or Knowledge (local) checks to know who would be a good source to go to for information of a specific kind, in this case.

Because the characters are under little time pressure throughout the adventure and have the run of the city, encounters with these NPCs could occur at nearly any stage during the adventure, not merely after the assassination attack. In particular, they may be returning to some of the NPCs they spoke to earlier to learn more after they deal with Ike and his minions at the Cathedral of Wee Jas. Thus, general notes about the NPCs' attitudes and available information should prove more helpful than specific encounter descriptions.

THE CHISEL

The Chisel, a secret organization of rich merchants and artisans, remains active in Cauldron. Although the organization focuses its efforts on the economic interests of its members, characters who participated in "The Demonskar Legacy" likely have ties to them and would do well to seek out Maavu Arlintal, an important member of the organization and a likely ally. Maavu is in Cauldron, overseeing the repair and reconstruction of his warehouse on Magma Avenue.

If Maavu died in the events described in "The Demonskar Legacy," the information described below can be obtained from another member of the Chisel like Oliron Masht or Ekaym Smallcask, although to contact them the PCs must travel to the nearby village of Redgorge.

Maavu Arlintal: Mavuu is nearly 55 years old, but he remains tall and handsome and has the voice and energy of a much younger man. Mavuu can offer the characters little in the way of magical aid, but he can relate any of the rumors described earlier, give the characters an accurate view of the discontent that still grows within Cauldron, and can provide reasonable estimates of the changes that have been made to the town guard. Maavu also knows that many of Cauldron's residents have moved away and that a great deal more seem to be considering such a move. Maavu has a keen understanding of the dangers that travel poses to commonfolk, and he can help the characters understand that conditions must be bad indeed within the city for anyone, much less large numbers of people, to consider a dangerous and expensive relocation. He can also tell them that although the city government has graciously pardoned him for his part in the Cauldron Tax Riot and are allowing him to rebuild his warehouse, he still suspects things aren't all as they seem with the rulers of the city. For now, however, he prefers to keep his theories to himself.

Maavu is at a loss to explain the assassination attempt, but rightly points out that the PCs have made a lot of enemies over the last year, any one of which could be behind the attempt.

CHURCHES, SHRINES, AND CATHEDRALS

The PCs have probably made contact before with some of Cauldron's temples, especially with Jenya and the Church of St. Cuthbert.

Asfelkir Hranleurt: The high priest of the Temple of Kord's reaction to questions depends entirely upon his past dealings with the PCs. He can confirm that the Cathedral of Wee Jas has grown more powerful over the past several months, but he sees nothing to worry about in this. He's been in Cauldron for many years, and over those years he's seen the strength of all Cauldron's religious institutions wax and wane. He's quick to point out that the Temple of Lordly Might has remained a solid pillar of the community throughout, but has little more to add. He reacts to news of the assassination attempt with indignation and outrage, no matter what his prior relationship was with the PCs, but he has no actual insights into the source of the attempt.

Embril Aloustinai: Embril is the high-priestess of the Cathedral of Wee Jas and one of the Cagewrights' most powerful allies. She is away on mysterious errands of her own for the duration of "Secrets of the Soul Pillars." Should the opportunity arise, hinting at Embril's power and spellcasting ability can help foreshadow events in a future Adventure Path module.

In any case, if the PCs seek out the Cathedral of Wee Jas before the assassination takes place, they find it to be "closed for renovation work." If they persist in attempts to enter the Cathedral, Ike simply moves up his plans a bit and defends the Cathedral from the PCs as detailed in Chapter Two.

Jenya Urikas: Jenya is a young woman with premature streaks of gray in her rich brown hair. When the characters first return to Cauldron, Jenya sends them a note welcoming them back to the city. Should the characters wish to meet with her, she's more than willing to discuss conditions in Cauldron, their previous adventures, or whatever else the group might be interested in.

One thing she's heard that has been troubling her is the growing rivalry between the Cathedral of Wee Jas and the Shrine of Pelor. She's heard that father Kristof of Pelor believes that the Wee Jas worshipers plan to build their Cathedral high enough to block the sun's morning rays from reaching the Shrine of Pelor. While it's true that the Cathedral has recently undergone some additional con-

struction, Jenya is more worried that the added friction between the two churches points to something more.

Should the characters require healing or other assistance after the assassins' attack, Jenya is happy to help them. Depending upon their participation in previous adventures, Jenya may even offer to only charge the PCs for expensive material components. She performs the spellcasting herself in most cases.

If asked, Jenya uses the *Star of Justice* (a *+1 holy mace* with the power to cast *divination* once per week, and a sacred relic of the Church of St. Cuthbert) to help the players track down their assassins. If the *Star of Justice* is used in this manner, it provides the following clue:

"Cages above and bones below
Death the door and magic the key
Knives but dust and souls the prize."

Although the meaning of the first line of this riddle should not become apparent until the characters have been through the Cathedral of Wee Jas (and perhaps not even then), the second line has clear meaning to Jenya or any PC who makes a successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20); "death" and "magic" appearing so close together seems to point toward the worship of Wee Jas. Clever players might figure out that the third line indicates that the assassins are ultimately unimportant and that instead it is the soul pillars in the ruins of Karran-Kural and the *soulcages* that hold Cauldron's fate.

Kristof Jurgensen: The last few months have not been kind to the sole resident priest of the Shrine of Pelor. Kristof is wild-eyed and paranoid these days, convinced that the Cathedral of Wee Jas is out to get him. He points to the new construction atop their central spire as proof; the higher reaches come close to blocking the rays of the rising sun over his humble shrine. Although his attitude may seem extreme to the PCs, it is unfortunately justified. Embril has long hated Kristof, and over the past few years has been doing what she can to force him out of town. Unfortunately, Kristof has no proof apart from his paranoia. If told about the assassination attempt, he immediately blames the Cathedral of Wee Jas, if a bit *too* earnestly; he is not put off by the fact that nothing on the assassins' bodies indicated they were worshipers of Wee Jas.

Nidrama: An enigmatic protector of the region, Nidrama is a female movanic deva. She willingly aids any characters who have proven themselves in the defense of Cauldron. Even if the events of "The Demonskar Legacy" did not take place in your campaign, Jenya can direct the characters to Nidrama. As a 10-Hit Die creature, she may be summoned via *planar binding* or *planar ally* spells. Nidrama begins any encounter with the characters with an attitude of friendly. A DC 20 Diplomacy check shifts her attitude to helpful. Although she can't take a direct hand in the intrigues of Cauldron, she is willing to help characters by casting *divination*, *commune*, or any other cleric spell (caster level 9th).

Nidrama's celestial overlords cannot give her direct information about Vhalantru's disguise or about the *soulcages*, but they can point the players toward the temple of Wee Jas once the assassination encounter has taken place. Of course, if the PCs simply cast *divination* or *commune* themselves, they can receive the same information.

THE CITY GOVERNMENT

Although Cauldron's government may seem like the last entity the PCs might want to consult, they may still attempt to do so.

Skylar Krewis: If he was rescued from the Cauldron Tax Riot by the PCs in "The Demonskar Legacy" (*DUNGEON* #104), Sergeant Krewis remains a strong ally. Lately, he's been patrolling the northeast quarter of the city; locating him during the day requires a successful Gather Information check (DC 20). Skylar can confirm that the Cathedral of Wee Jas has donated a large amount of money and magic resources to the government, but notes a little bitterly that little of these resources have trickled down to the guards themselves; they are more overworked than ever. If asked about possible corruption higher in the government, Skyler glances around nervously before admitting that, "Things have definitely been better in the Guard." He refuses to go into further detail, claiming that his suspicions are merely that, and until he can find proof of his fears he doesn't want to name any names. He does warn the PCs to avoid too much contact with more powerful members of the guard and government, and that if they get into too much trouble he'll do what he can to smooth things over. Just how much Skylar can help if the PCs run afoul of the guard or government is up to you; you can use him to keep the campaign from derailing too badly if the PCs get caught breaking into the Cathedral of Wee Jas, for example, and are thrown in jail.

If the PCs ask Skylar to aid in tracking down the source of the assassins, he agrees readily and asks that their bodies be turned over to the guard for *speak with dead* spells. If the PCs prefer no to do so (perhaps fearing government involvement), Skylar understands and tells them he'll do what he can to find out who ordered the assassination. If the PCs seem to be stuck in tracking them down, Skylar can inform them a few days later that it looks like the assassination attempt has links to the Cathedral of Wee Jas. You should only hand Chapter Two to the PCs in this manner if they're truly stumped, though; it's much more satisfying for them to figure it all out on their own.

THE SEEDY UNDERBELLY

The PCs may have made contacts with some of Cauldron's seedier citizens over the past several adventures. The local thieves' guild, the Last Laugh, has closed its doors and most of its direct agents are nowhere to be found. Characters who persist in trying to contact members of this group

may find themselves receiving more and more threatening warnings to mind their own business. One sometime agent of the Last Laugh is a bit more approachable, however, if the price is right.

Artus Shemwick: If the PCs played "Flood Season," (*Dungeon* #98), they may try to contact Artus Shemwick, a local fence and information broker with ties to the Last Laugh. The guild has recently cut ties with him as well, much to his distress, and as a result he's a bit more cautious about fencing goods or information. He can be found at the Tipped Tankard, where he works part-time as a cook; his initial attitude toward the PCs should vary, depending on how their last meeting went, but he shouldn't be friendly or helpful. If he can be made helpful, though, he agrees to look into any questions the PCs may have. His price is steep; 2,500 gold pieces. You can use Artus to guide the PCs toward the next chapter of the adventure as you see fit; at the very least, his information should point them to an NPC who can help them more. If asked to find out who ordered the assassination attempt, he raises his price to 5,000 gp. Artus has a feeling that the Last Laugh is behind it, and wants the extra money to finance a quick getaway if he gets in over his head. As with Sergeant Krewis, you can use Artus to lead the PCs to Chapter Two if they're stuck for clues.

SHOPKEEPERS

Friendly shopkeepers are probably the best place to go hunting for rumors. The PCs can learn a rumor from them without having to make Gather Information checks.

Tygot Mispas: Tygot Mispas, the halfling owner of an antiquity shop on Lava Avenue, helped the PCs uncover the mystery of "The Demonskar Legacy" (*Dungeon* #104). He (and any other shopkeepers the PCs may have befriended) can tell the PCs that the newest set of taxes levied against his business have nearly bankrupted him, and although he's been in Cauldron for his entire life (well over 100 years), he's for the first time seriously considering moving somewhere less expensive. Tygot expresses concern and shock if told about the assassination, but has no further insights as to who may have arranged it.

THE STORMBLADES

The adventuring company known as the Stormblades consists of four young adventurers culled from Cauldron's nobility. One member of the group is currently dead and lies in state at the temple of Wee Jas. While adventuring under Cauldron, they were set upon by a powerful group of undead lead by a human wizard. Unbeknownst to the Stormblades, this was Fetor Abradius (see area **K12**), a dangerous loremaster and member of the Cagewrights. Fetor's ambush was arranged by Ike Iverson, who was in turn acting under orders from Vhalantru.

Annah Taskerhill: A tall, strikingly beautiful, young human woman, Annah has traditionally held little regard for the PCs. Her group's recent defeat under Cauldron has rattled her, though, and she doesn't seem as cocky and self-assured as she may have in prior encounters with the PCs. If they ask to meet with her, she'll grant them a brief meeting at the Coy Nixie tavern. Her initial attitude is unfriendly, but if she can be made friendly she tells them what happened deep under Cauldron, along with mentioning Todd Vanderboren's tragic fate. She confides that the wizard who ambushed them seemed to know all about their tactics, strengths, and weaknesses; it was no idle attack. If the characters can shift her attitude to helpful, she admits that they were on a mission to scout the lower caverns against a possible kuo-toa invasion, and that the mission was given to them by Ike Iverson of the temple of Wee Jas.

Cora Lathenmire: A young cauldron noble like the other members of the Stormblades, Cora is even less interested in talking with the characters than Annah is. If approached in person or through other social contacts, Cora replies that she is considering retiring from adventuring and suggests that the characters contact Annah Taskerhill if they wish to discuss the Stormblades' adventures.

Zachary Aslaxin II: Zachary is a tall and ruggedly handsome young noble with a well-trimmed beard and curly dark brown hair. Like Cora, Zachary has no interest in talking with the characters and directs them to Annah. If asked about Todd, he scowls but says nothing. He'd rather have seen Todd taken to the Temple of Kord for *resurrection*, but since none of the clerics there are powerful enough to perform such magic, he grudgingly went along with the plan to seek aid from the Cathedral of Wee Jas.

Todd Vanderboren: The ambush in the caverns beneath Cauldron claimed Todd's life. His companions escaped with his body, and he currently lies in state in the Cathedral of Wee Jas awaiting *resurrection*. See area **W4**.

THE STRIDERS OF FHARLANGHN

A neutral organization, the Striders of Fharlanghn are nevertheless opposed to the Cagewrights and their plans. The Striders do not yet know the extent of the Cagewrights' plans nor do they know about the existence of the *soulcages*. However, they do suspect that the Cagewrights have a contact very high in the Cauldron government (although they do not yet suspect Vhalantru).

Fario Ellegoth and Fellian Shard: Friends and adventurers, these two know a great deal about the changes to the city's guards, the growing tensions among the populace, and once the assassination attempt has taken place, they even know that the Cathedral of Wee Jas has a temporary high-priest whom they suspect of having spent a large amount of the temple's resources creating several powerful undead creatures. That the Cathedral of Wee Jas has donated a great deal of magical support to the town guard and to the new mercenaries the government hired to help protect the town has not escaped their notice; they worry that the Cathedral

may be growing too powerful as a result and may threaten Cauldron's religious balance.

Fellian and Fario have information of great relevance to the characters, although it is up to the PCs to recognize this fact. Because they have been scouting the city so thoroughly, Fario and Fellian are well aware of many of the unusual goings on in the city. In particular, they can describe the strange preparations of late at the Cathedral of Wee Jas. Several powerful mercenaries (including at least two stone giants) now guard the temple, and lesser priests and lay-worshipers have been denied access to the temple since the day of the assassination attempt. To the two Striders, it appears that the temple is readying itself against an attack. The characters might guess that it is themselves whom the temple's inhabitants are preparing to fight, but Fario and Fellian have no way of knowing this. If they are told about the assassination, they recommend that the PCs speak with Meerthan about the event immediately, and are willing to introduce them to him.

Both Fario and Fellian have a permanent *Rary's telepathic bond* linking each of them to Meerthan.

Shensen Tesseril: Originally stationed at a roadside inn named the Lucky Monkey, Shensen has taken up residence in the small copse of trees near the Lakeside Pavilion at Meerthan's request. She has been keeping an eye on many aspects of Cauldron normally overlooked by others, and has recently become somewhat alarmed at the strange smells (stranger than usual, that is) that have been wafting in from the lake of late. Additionally, plants that live close to the lake shore are dying, and more and more dead fish are washing up on the shore. The locals seem to think nothing of it, but Shensen worries that these signs might point to some instability in the caverns deep below Cauldron. In fact, these developments are a subtle indication of the actions of Cagewrights deep below who have begun to stir the ancient heart of the volcano. As a result, plumes of noxious gasses have risen as far as the surface, creating stranger than usual odors around the lake. These activities foreshadow events to come in a future Adventure Path installment.

If told about the assassination attempt, Shensen is shocked and enraged. She volunteers any of her spells to aid the PCs if necessary, but since her investigations have been so focused on the more natural problems facing Cauldron, she can't provide any further information. She does recommend that the PCs speak with Meerthan about the event immediately, though, and is willing to introduce them to him.

Shensen has a permanent *Rary's telepathic bond* linking her to Meerthan.

Meerthan Eliothlorn: Meerthan leads the Striders investigating Cauldron. He provides magical support and directs the efforts of the other Striders within the city. Meerthan maintains a magical disguise as a male dwarf merchant, and does not readily divulge either his allegiance to the Striders, his real nature, or his spellcasting abilities. Meerthan shares a permanent *Rary's telepathic bond* spell with the three other Strider agents in Cauldron.

Meerthan knows about the current situation in the Cathedral of Wee Jas, and once he hears about the assassination he becomes sure that they are involved somehow. Meerthan willingly shares what he knows with the characters if they contact him, speaking to them in his dwarf disguise. He never takes it upon himself to contact them,

CAMPAIGN SEED: DRAGONSPAWN

Regardless of whether or not the characters played through "Zenith Trajectory" (the adventure that introduced Dhorlot the Dragonfather), Dhorlot's progeny continue to pose a credible threat for many years to come. If the characters have not yet confronted Dhorlot, or if he managed to escape their first encounter, they might be forced to deal with the now adult (advanced an age category) black dragon. Dhorlot's progeny hold a multitude of differing views, but most will at least be curious about the characters because of their reputation in the region and perhaps because of their dealings with their father.

The characters, having grown quite powerful, should be prepared to find their attitudes emulated throughout the city as well. Should the characters deal peaceably with Zarik or others of Dhorlot's progeny, the citizens of Cauldron might well allow a few to settle in their midst. Should the characters find themselves in conflict with one or more of Dhorlot's descendants, they might well find that other citizens have taken it upon themselves to drive other half-dragons out of the city.

though, since he prefers to work through his agents and remain impartial to current events.

MAGICAL INVESTIGATION

The PCs should have access to a large number of divination spells that can make their investigation much easier. Even if none of them can cast these spells, they should have allies in Cauldron who can. Don't volunteer any of these spells to them; they should hit upon the idea of using magic themselves.

Divination: The *divination* spell can provide a great deal of information, albeit in cryptic form. Any casting of the *divination* spell that successfully provides an answer gives the few cryptic lines of text described under Jenya's description above.

Vision/Legend Lore: Either of these powerful spells proves incredibly useful should the characters take the time or expend the resources to cast them. If cast on one of the assassin's bodies, the caster learns a great deal about the assassin's life, including a glimpse of the meeting with Ike Iverson during which the assassins receive their orders to kill the player characters.

Speak with Dead: Casting *speak with dead* on an assassin's body can prove quite informative, if the spell is cast successfully (remember that the body gets a Will save to resist this spell). The affected corpse gives short, cryptic answers, but given the right questions reveals the involvement of the temple of Wee Jas. Here are sample answers to questions the characters might put to the corpse:

- *Who sent you?*: The Veiled Woman (DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check to recognize this as a little-known appellation for Wee Jas).
- *Why did you attack us?*: The pay was good.
- *Do you worship Wee Jas?*: No.
- *Why were you in Cauldron?*: Hired.
- *What were you hired to do?*: Kill you.

Commune/Contact Other Plane: Casting ether of these spells provides the characters with a quick way to bypass much of the legwork normally required for an investigation of this sort. A character's deity can answer questions about the assassination accurately, within the restrictions described under the description of the *commune* spell. If the PCs use *contact other plane* and try to contact an outer plane, there's a 10% chance that the power contacted is allied with either Wee Jas or the Cagewrights, and lies on all its answers.

INTERLUDE: THE DRAGONSPAWN

Light: Daylight

Sound: Background noises of the city (DC 0), Zarik Dhor's bellowing challenge (DC 0).

Reaction: To sounds of battle: A guard patrol arrives in 1d4 minutes.

Auras: Faint conjuration (one of Dhorlot's potions), faint illusion (one of Dhorlot's potions), faint transmutation (Dhorlot's gloves and three of his potions), moderate abjuration (Dhorlot's chain shirt, cloak, and ring), moderate transmutation (Dhorlot's spiked chain).

> As you move down the street, noting again the subtle signs of tension among the commonfolk of the city, a thundering cry echoes from behind you. Turning, you see a powerful draconic warrior in the center of the street about 20 yards away. Clad in light chain armor and holding a huge spiked chain, the warrior stands several feet above the head of the tallest human. Although he halts his advance, the commoners in the street rush to get out of the monster's way. His face, a rough mix of dragon and bull, seems to grind out a question: "Did you kill the Dragon Father?"

Nearly 50 years ago, just after reaching young adulthood, the black dragon Dhorlot began an obsessive drive to create half-dragon progeny. One of his most bizarre couplings was with a female minotaur shaman who led a tribe far to the north. Dhorlot proved a cruel overlord to the minotaur tribe, but he did not stay long, viewing his time with the minotaurs as a waste because the progeny matured too slowly for his obsessive tastes and because none of them ever developed proper wings. Dhorlot later joined the organization known as the Cagewrights and continued his breeding experiments in the kuo-toan shrine of Bhal-Hamatugn. If the characters played through "Zenith Trajectory" (*Dungeon* #102) it is likely that they met and even killed Dhorlot while exploring the shrine in search of Zenith Splintershield.

In this encounter, one of Dhorlot's most powerful progeny, a half-black dragon minotaur named Zarik Dhor, comes looking for the characters. Unlike the other encounters in this adventure, there is no set time or place for the encounter with Zarik. It's up to you to decide when, if, and how the encounter occurs, based on the needs of your group. A complex character in his own right, Zarik's selfish nature and occasional bouts of cruelty are balanced by his disdain for his father's behavior. This conflict gives the characters at least some chance of negotiating with him rather than having the encounter default to a simple combat. Here are some of the best ways to use the interlude with Zarik in your game.

Interject Action: Should either of the investigation stages of the adventure bog down, a short but intense combat encounter with Zarik can offer a diversion. Because the encounter can come at any time, it grants you a great deal of control over the pace of the game session. Zarik might want to challenge the characters physically for any number of reasons. Perhaps he had plans to confront Dhorlot himself as a confirmation of his own might. Because the characters have robbed him of that chance (by killing or driving Dhorlot out of the region), Zarik instead wishes to measure

his strength against them. On the other hand, Zarik could have vengeance itself in mind—he held no love for his draconic sire, yet his bond to his heritage compels him to take vengeance on the characters.

Interject Roleplaying: It's possible for the right mix of characters, particularly those with an abundance of divinatory magic, to proceed through the short investigative sections of this adventure quite quickly. If this happens in your group, you might wish to introduce Zarik not as a direct physical threat but rather as a powerful potential antagonist who's more interested in talking with the characters than smashing them into pulp. In this case, Zarik came to Cauldron to learn about those who killed his father, and he has immensely personal decisions to make regarding the fate of his draconic sire as well as those who killed him (or drove him out of his chosen home of Bhaal-Hamatugn). If you choose to use Zarik in this way, he can provide an interesting opportunity for roleplaying in the midst of an otherwise combat-intensive adventure.

Provide Additional Experience: Many of the encounters in this adventure are quite challenging, especially if the characters aren't careful to rest and replenish their resources between encounters. In the event that one or two characters perish, or if they've found other adventures in the Adventure Path to be too lethal, there's some chance that the group could fall behind the suggested level. This interlude encounter, whether run as a combat- or roleplaying-focused encounter, provides an opportunity for the characters to gain a few extra experience points and bring them back to the adventure's stated level ranges.

Creature: Zarik Dhor, a powerful half-black dragon minotaur fighter/barbarian, sought out the characters because of their previous interactions with the dragon Dhorlot. He appears as a fearsome reptilian minotaur with the signature horns of a black dragon.

Zarik Dhor, Male Half-Black Dragon Minotaur Ftr4/Bar4: CR 14; Large Dragon; HD 10d12+4d10+70; hp 162; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 30, touch 14, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +14, Grp +29; Atk +28 melee (2d6+20, +2 *spiked chain*); Full Atk +28/+23/+18 melee (2d6+20, +2 *spiked chain*) and +23 melee (1d8+5, bite) and +23 gore (1d8+5 gore); Space/Reach 10ft./10ft. (15 ft. with spiked chain), SA breath weapon, powerful charge 4d6+11, rage 2/day; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immune to acid, sleep, and paralysis, low-light vision, natural cunning, scent, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CN; SV Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +12; Str 32, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, 60-foot line of acid, 6d8; Reflex DC 18 half (DC 20 if raging). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Rage (Ex): While raging, Zarik's statistics change as follows: AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 25; Grp +31; Atk +30 melee (2d6+23, +2 *spiked chain*); Full Atk +30/+25/+20 melee (2d6+23, +2 *spiked chain*) and +25 melee (1d8+6, bite) and +25 gore (1d8+6 gore); SA powerful charge 4d6+13; SV Fort +20, Will +14; Str 36, Con 24.

Skills: Intimidate +16, Listen +17, Search +14, Sense Motive +4, Spot +15, Survival +10, Swim +21.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (spiked chain), Weapon Specialization (spiked chain).

Zarik Dhor

Languages: Common, Draconic, Giant.

Possessions: *+3 chain shirt, +2 spiked chain, cloak of resistance +3, gloves of dexterity +2, ring of protection +2, potion of bull's strength* (2), *potion of bear's endurance* (2), *potion of see invisibility* (2), *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), 1,900 gp.

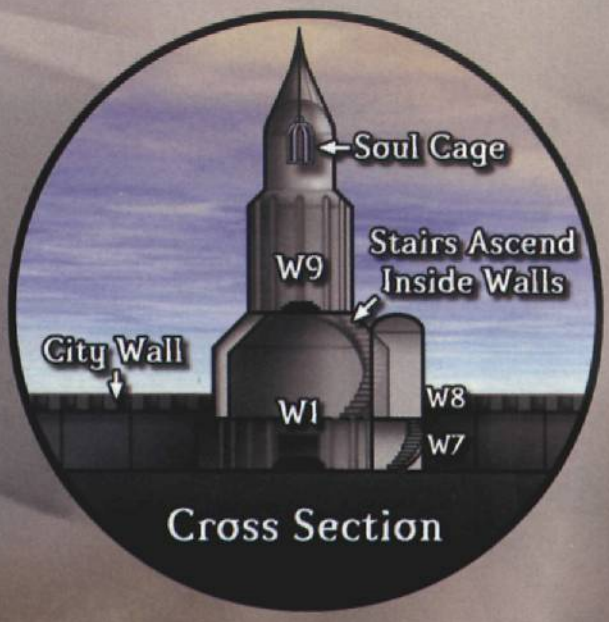
Tactics: Should the characters decide to fight this powerful foe, Zarik uses the extra reach of his spiked chain to maintain reach superiority and take out spellcasters first. Beyond this simple approach, Zarik wastes no time with fancy tactics—he rages and starts laying about with his spiked chain. He saves his breath weapon until he can target more than one character, preferably after at least one of them has been severely wounded.

CHAPTER TWO: DEATH AND MAGIC

Eventually, the characters trace their assailants to the Cathedral of Wee Jas. This temple, now the most powerful in Cauldron, has been growing in power in recent years. Led by the potent spellcaster Embril Aloustiani, the Cathedral allied itself early with the Cagewrights and Vhalantru. The alliance has given the Cathedral a great advantage over the other temples in the city. Although much of the city's populace viewed the Cathedral of Wee Jas with a small amount of suspicion in years past, the clergy's prominent place in city affairs has paid off handsomely in terms of both financial resources and new worshipers. Each time that Vhalantru succeeded in gathering more power to himself or enacting a "city-saving" measure, the clerics of Wee Jas were on hand to lend their support. As it has grown in political might, so too has the temple grown in the eyes of the populace, and due to newly finished construction atop the already impressive central tower, the Cathedral is now one of the grandest buildings in all of Cauldron.

As soon as the assassins fail, Ike Iverson puts the Cathedral on a defensive footing. He places formidable guards in the Grand Hall and ensconces himself on the upper story with even more powerful minions. With the assassins gone, Ike knows that it's only a matter of time before the PCs find their way to him, and he prefers to meet them in the sheltered might of his Cathedral rather than in the open city. If the assassins fail, Ike must also tread carefully around Vhalantru. He quickly assures the beholder that when the characters come to the Cathedral, he'll deal with them personally. Vhalantru is willing to give Ike a second chance to dispose of the characters only because Ike is too powerful a minion to waste. Furthermore, the beholder knows little of Embril Aloustinai's enigmatic journey away from the city, and does not wish to waste time with a confrontation, should the powerful high-priestess make an unexpected return to Cauldron.

TEMPLE OF WEE JAS



As the players enter the Cathedral, however, they know nothing of this behind-the-scenes maneuvering between the evil powers in the city. Instead they find a grand temple protected by powerful mercenaries and curiously devoid of lesser priests and every-day worshipers.

The Cathedral itself is built primarily of stone created by hundreds of *wall of stone* and *stone shape* spells cunningly woven together. The result gives the impression that the entire structure was carved from a single immense block of volcanic stone, including the new addition atop the central dome. Internal walls are eight inches thick (consisting of two *walls of stone* side by side and joined with *stone shape* spells) and have been magically treated to increase their strength. Internal doors are of iron and covered with etchings and carvings of images sacred to Wee Jas. Each door is currently kept locked; Ike carries the master key for the doors, and has temporarily confiscated all the other keys until the current trouble is over.

The entire Cathedral is protected by an *unhallow* spell cast at 20th level. The *unhallow* effect also holds an *invisibility purge* spell (also cast at 20th level). *Unhallow* provides evil creatures in the Cathedral with the following benefits. (These benefits have not been included in the stat blocks for evil creatures encountered in the Cathedral.)

- Turn undead checks suffer a –4 profane penalty.
- Rebuke undead checks gain a +4 profane bonus.
- All creatures are affected by a *protection from good* spell (+2 deflection bonus to AC and +2 resistance to saves vs. attacks and spells made by good creatures).
- *Invisibility purge* throughout the entire Cathedral.

Magically Treated Stone Wall: 8 in. thick; Hardness 16; hp 120; Climb DC 30; Break DC 56.

Iron Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 40.

W1. THE GRAND HALL (EL 13)

Light: Torchlight throughout the room from ten everburning torches.

Sound: Guards talking quietly (DC 15).

Reaction: To sounds of battle—Ike and the other creatures in room **W9** ready themselves for battle according to the tactics described in that room (Listen DC 15).

Auras: Moderate evocation (*unhallow*), faint evocation (everburning torches).

- **Elite Half-Orc Guards (3)**: Faint abjuration (full plate and heavy shield), faint transmutation (dwarven waraxe and gauntlets).
- **Calmus Vel**: Faint abjuration (full plate, light shield, and cloak), faint illusion (scroll), faint transmutation (heavy mace and periapt).
- **Evil**: Faint (half-orcs, Calmus Vel), strong (*unhallow*).

> The grand hall of the Cathedral of Wee Jas is a magnificent sight. The huge octagonal room measures 150 feet across and the vaulted ceiling rises to a height of 50 feet in the hall's center. Pillars engraved with images sacred to the faith of Wee Jas ring the massive chamber, and an exquisitely rendered symbol of the death goddess covers most of the chamber's otherwise bare floor. Built to house huge gatherings and contain powerful magical ceremonies, the hall is as beautifully and sturdily built as any building in the city. Strangely, there are no pews or other items of furniture at all in the chamber. Other than the grand doors leading into the main hall and a second set of even larger doors to the east, one small door in the southwest corner of the room hangs slightly ajar. A second normal-sized door opens onto a southern balcony about fifteen feet above the ground. The balcony provides access to a narrow set of stairs encased in an intricate iron lattice. These stairs wind upward along the inner surface of the chamber's walls to a third door high up near the ceiling above.

Although normally the chamber holds spare but functional seating for the commonfolk, Ike has cleared the hall of everything but the torches that light the grand room. Knowing that the characters will bring force against the Cathedral soon, he warned the lesser priests to stay away and to keep the commonfolk out of the Cathedral until the conflict is resolved.

The lesser clerics and visitors are housed in outbuildings removed from the Cathedral itself, and pose no threat to the characters once Ike and the guardians in the main temple have been destroyed. If the characters investigate the outbuildings they encounter a few functionaries with minor spellcasting ability. These priests have served in Vhalantru's patrols at the orders of Ike and Embril, but they know nothing of the Cagewrights, Vhalantru's true nature, or the *soulcages*.

The stairway that winds up the inside of the upper reaches of this chamber provides access from the smaller outer tower (areas **W6–W8**) to the newly constructed Hall of Night's Rising (area **W9**). The iron lattice provides both support to the stairway and cover to anyone on the stairs.

Iron Lattice: 3 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 90 per 5 ft. section; Climb DC 15; Break DC 28.

Creatures: An elite group of guards lingers in the Grand Hall, awaiting the arrival of the characters. The guards are all well aware of the characters' appearances, but not their tactics, strengths, or weaknesses. They attack on sight.

Should the characters succeed in sneaking past the guards or enter the Cathedral in disguise, the guards react quickly and intelligently should they discover that the characters have infiltrated the temple.

None of the guards in this room know anything about the Cagewrights, Vhalantru's true nature, or the *soulcages*.

Stone Giants (2): hp 125, 118; *Monster Manual* 124.

Elite Half-Orc Guard Ftr8 (3): CR 8; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 8d10+16; hp 64; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +8, Grp +12; Atk +15 melee (1d10+7/19–20/×3, *+1 dwarven waraxe*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d10+7/19–20/×3, *+1 dwarven waraxe*); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Jump +15.

Feats: Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Greater Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe), Improved Critical (dwarven waraxe), Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (dwarven waraxe).

Languages: Common, Orc.

Possessions: *+1 full plate, +1 heavy shield, +1 dwarven waraxe, gauntlets of ogre power*, 200 gp.

Calmus Vel, Human Clr8: CR 8; Medium humanoid (human); HD 8d8+24; hp 63; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6, Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+2, *+1 heavy mace*); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+2, *+1 heavy mace*); SQ rebuke undead, spells, spontaneous casting (inflict); SW —; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +9; Str 13, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +13, Heal +14, Knowledge (religion) +11.

Feats: Combat Casting, Improved Counterspell, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Languages: Common.

Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1, save DC 13 + spell level); 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *read magic, guidance*; 1st—*cause fear*, cure light wounds* (2), *comprehend languages, divine favor, shield of faith*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, death knell*, hold person*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, cure serious wounds* (2), *magic vestment, protection from energy*; 4th—*cure critical wounds, death ward*, greater magic weapon*.

*Domain spell. *Domains*: Death (death touch 1/day, damage 7d6), Magic (use magic items as 4th-level wizard).

Possessions: *+1 full plate, +1 light shield, +1 heavy mace, periapt of wisdom +2, cloak of resistance +2, scroll of mirror image*.

Tactics: Unlike the assassins, the half-orcs and the stone giants know little of the characters' strengths, having been told only that adventurers are likely to show up and that they need to be killed.

Once more than four of his fellow guards have fallen, Calmus Vel attempts to retreat through the door to the south and rush up the stairs to join Ike. Far from discouraging this tactic, Ike hopes that Calmus's retreat leads battle-weary characters his way just as he's finishing his own preparations for the conflict.

W2. THE HIGH ALTAR

Light: Torchlight throughout the room from four everburning torches.

Sound: None.
Reaction: To sounds of conversation—guards in the Grand Hall prepare an ambush against anyone entering area **W1** from this room (Listen DC 15).
Auras: Faint evocation (everburning torches), moderate evocation (*unhallow*).

- **Evil**: Strong (*unhallow*).

A massive pair of double doors, if opened, would provide this area a commanding view of the area to the west. Two beautifully sculpted pillars frame a massive onyx altarstone encrusted with runes and elaborate magical glyphs. The jet-black walls have been painted with images sacred to Wee Jas: stylized sarcophagi, obscure magical symbols, and other religious imagery. Two massive tapestries cover the wall directly behind the altar, giving those standing to the west an impressive view of the altar and its imagery of the death goddess. A single door sits in the corner of the room to the southwest.

The high altar sits on a raised platform a few steps above the floor of the Grand Hall. The room itself exists entirely for ceremonial purposes and to impress gathered worshipers with the might and grandeur of Wee Jas. Normally, the huge doors are kept open into the Great Hall, supported by the edges of the short flight of stairs that lead down into it, but Ike has closed and locked the doors.

Massive Bronze Double Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 120; Break DC 34; Open Lock DC 40.

Treasure: Two of the wall hangings are small enough to be stolen, but they are still quite large and have relatively little resale value when compared with the magical equipment of Ike and the mercenaries guarding the temple. Each wall hanging weighs 120 pounds and sells for 100 gp in the appropriate marketplace. Unless the characters declare their actions in the Cathedral openly to the town guard, attempting to sell the wall hangings in Cauldron likely leads to trouble.

W3. PREPARATION CHAMBER

Light: Torchlight throughout the room from 2 everburning torches.
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (everburning torches), moderate evocation (*unhallow*).

- **Evil**: Strong (*unhallow*).

This well-appointed chamber houses several comfortable chairs. The walls are pleasantly decorated with hanging art, and a long polished wooden table rests against the northern wall. Two bookcases hold a few minor religious texts, writings of those devoted to the service of Wee Jas.

The priests of Wee Jas use this room to prepare themselves before addressing a gathering of followers or performing rituals at the high altar. The room has seen little use since Embril left the city.

Treasure: This sitting and reading room has comfortable enough furnishings, but little of real value. The texts that fill the bookcases grant a +1 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (religion) checks made while consulting them. These books are bulky and heavy, and must be stored in a reasonably orderly library to provide a researcher with this bonus. The full set of books is worth 500 gp.

W4. RITUAL CHAMBER

Light: Torchlight throughout the room from 4 everburning torches.
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (everburning torches), faint necromancy (*gentle repose*), moderate evocation (*unhallow*).

- **Evil**: Strong (*unhallow*).

This long chamber is strikingly bare, its polished walls and floor a glossy black. Gilded sconces hang in each corner, and each holds a torch that glows with a silently flickering green flame. The austere room is divided by a thick velvet curtain about two thirds of the length of the room away, and the body of a young man lies on a long low table in the middle of the room. An elaborate holy symbol of Wee Jas covers most of the floor.

This clean and nearly bare room is used for minor rituals conducted by the temple's priests. It currently houses Todd Vanderboren's body, kept preserved with a *gentle repose* spell (caster level 13). Until his recent demise, Todd was part of the Stormblades, a group of young Cauldron nobles that the PCs might well have run across before. The Stormblades have been growing in power and rival the PCs as the city's most accomplished adventuring group. Knowing that the Stormblades' growing exploits might provide them with enough fame to challenge him for control of the city, Vhalantru arranged for the group to be ambushed deep beneath Cauldron. The ambush nearly succeeded in destroying the group, and it left Todd dead and his companions demoralized and fragmented.

Todd's body lies here awaiting a *resurrection* spell. The body itself appears to be relatively intact, and although it bears numerous wounds, none of them seems mortal. Todd was actually slain by a *finger of death* spell cast by Fetor Abradius. Although the Stormblades quickly secured funds to pay for Todd's *resurrection*, the Stormblades do not know that Ike Iverson, the priest retained to perform the powerful spell, is in league with Vhalantru and awaits the beholder's orders before performing the ceremony.

Treasure: Todd Vanderboren's body is richly appointed, and anyone who takes the time to search his corpse finds a

gold ring studded with emeralds worth 300 gp, a fine silver necklace worth 100 gp, and a beautiful silk-lined cape worth 200 gp.

Development: Should the characters loot or harm the body, the rest of the Stormblades (and Todd himself, should he ever be brought back to life) seek restitution for the missing items. Alternately, if the PCs rescue Todd's body and aid in his *resurrection*, they may well be able to finally forge a lasting friendship with the rival adventurers.

W5. PRIESTS' QUARTERS

Light: None.
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Moderate evocation (*unhallow*).

- **Evil**: Strong (*unhallow*).

Single bedrooms fill the back of the temple, providing rooms for lesser clerics, visiting priests, or other guests too unimportant to house in richer quarters in the city. With Embril away and Ike's orders to vacate the building, the lesser clerics who usually occupy these rooms are not present, and the rooms are strikingly empty. Each holds a simple palate, a small wooden dresser, and a sconce sometimes used to house an everburning torch, but other than these simple furnishings the rooms are unremarkable.

W6. STORAGE CHAMBER

Light: None.
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Moderate evocation (*unhallow*).
Evil: Strong (*unhallow*).

> This small storage chamber is packed with dozens of boxes and lined with shelves. A musty smell fills the air, mixed with hints of exotic incense.

This room stores extra ceremonial gear, robes, and other mundane supplies used in the normal functioning of the Cathedral. Because most of the priests and staff have been ordered away from the building, the room remains full of supplies but packed and orderly.

W7. IKE IVERSON'S CHAMBER

Light: Torchlight throughout the room from two everburning torches.
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (everburning torches), moderate evocation (*unhallow*).
Evil: Strong (*unhallow*).

This bedroom is immaculately clean and perfectly ordered. The thick carpet is embroidered with hundreds of small designs of skulls and bones and arcane runes. The room's furnishings include a large, well-made bed, two large armoires filled with rich clothes and ceremonial robes, and a large desk.

This room is Ike Iverson's personal chamber. Papers cover the desk in orderly stacks, but they hold nothing but records of the Cathedral's day-to-day business for the last two months (corresponding to the time that Embril has been absent from the city).

Treasure: Ike's minor possessions fill the room, and some have considerable value. A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals three gilded candlesticks worth 50 gp each, a small money pouch containing 102 platinum pieces, and two beautifully made wall hangings worth 150 gp each.

W8. EMBRIL ALOUSTINAI'S CHAMBER

Light: Torchlight throughout the room from two everburning torches.
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint conjuration (potions hidden in desk), faint evocation (everburning torches), moderate evocation (*unhallow*).
Evil: Strong (*unhallow*).

A thick red carpet, emblazoned with the holy symbol of Wee Jas, covers the entire floor. The circular chamber has no windows to the outside, but a large window, currently covered by a thick curtain, overlooks the Grand Hall. The furniture consists of a well-made bed, a beautiful wooden armoire, and a small but beautifully carved wooden desk.

This richly appointed room serves as Embril Aloustinai's private chamber when she's in Cauldron. Because she's been gone for some time, none of her important possessions remain in the chamber.

The desk contains a fair amount of paperwork that outlines the day-to-day activities of the Cathedral's faithful. A successful Search check (DC 30) of the desk reveals a false bottom in one of the drawers. The hidden compartment underneath holds three potions of *cure moderate wounds* and a small sheaf of letters exchanged between Embril and a Cagewright loremaster named Fetor Abradius (see area **K12** below). All but one of the letters are brief reports that allude to a continuing and taxing search for something unnamed. Each letter concludes that all remains on schedule, but that the final answers still elude the searcher. The final letter is reproduced as Handout 1 on the following page.

W9. THE HALL OF NIGHT'S RISING (EL 15)

Light: Torchlight throughout the room from six everburning torches.
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint abjuration (Ike's full plate and cloak), faint evocation (everburning torches), faint illusion (two of Ike's scrolls), faint transmutation (Ike's periapt and boots), moderate conjuration (one of Ike's scrolls), moderate evocation (*unhallow* and Ike's ring), strong abjuration (*soulcage*), strong conjuration (*soulcage*), strong evocation (Ike's bastard sword), strong necromancy (*soulcage*).

- **Evil:** Moderate (Ike Iverson), strong (*unhallow*, bone devil, dread wraith, zombies).
- **Undead:** Overwhelming (dread wraith, zombies).

The ceiling of this vaulted chamber rises over fifty feet high. A low dais commands the center of the room, and a strange silvery-gray cage hangs down from the ceiling above.

The Hall of Night's Rising is the temple's most sacred chamber, used only for the Cathedral's most important rituals. Few creatures, even dedicated worshipers of the Death Goddess, ever see this chamber. Since the alliance with the Cagewrights was finalized, this hall has held a *soulcage*, one of the artifacts needed to bring about the Cagewrights' plans to turn Cauldron into a gate town. Although the *soulcage* hangs empty, its purpose is a secret that Ike Iverson cannot allow the characters to discover. The *soulcage's* presence and the potential wrath of both Vhalantru and Embril force Ike to stand here against the characters.

Creatures: To make ready for the PCs' eventual arrival, Ike Iverson surrounded himself with the Cathedral's most powerful undead guardians and cast *planar ally* to recruit the services of a bone devil.

Bone Devil: hp 105, *Monster Manual* 52.

Gray Render Zombies (5): hp 146, 133, 133, 125, 121, *Monster Manual* 267.

Dread Wraith: hp 104, *Monster Manual* 258.

Ike Iverson, Male Human Clr13: CR 13; Medium humanoid (human); HD 13d8+13; hp 75; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +9, Grp +11; Atk +15 melee (1d10+5/19–20, *+3 spell storing bastard sword*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d10+5/19–20, *+3 spell storing bastard sword*); SA rebuke undead, spells, spontaneous casting (inflict); SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +15; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 20, Cha 10.

Skills: Concentration +17, Diplomacy +8, Heal +13, Knowledge (religion) +17, Spellcraft +17.

Feats: Combat Casting, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Tomb-Tainted Soul (see sidebar), Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

Languages: Common, Infernal.

Spells Prepared (6/7+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1, save DC 15 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *guidance*, *read magic*; 1st—*bane*, *cause fear**, *comprehend languages*, *divine favor*, *obscuring mist* (2), *sanctuary*, *shield of*

faith; 2nd—*bear's endurance, bull's strength, death knell**, *hold person* (2), *resist energy, silence, spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*dispel magic**, *magic vestment* (4), *protection from energy*; 4th—*air walk, death ward**, *dismissal, divine power, greater magic weapon* (2); 5th—*divine favor* (quickened), *flame strike, righteous might, slay living**, *shield of faith* (quickened); 6th—*antimagic field**, *harm, heroes' feast*; 7th—*destruction**, *inflict serious wounds* (quickened).

*Domain spell. *Domains*: Death (death touch 1/day, damage 7d6), Magic (use magic items as 6th-level wizard).

Possessions: *+1 light fortification full plate* (*+3 light fortification full plate* with *magic vestment*), masterwork light shield (*+3 light shield* with *magic vestment*), *+1 spell storing bastard sword* (contains *hold person*; *+3 spell storing bastard sword* with *greater magic weapon*), *periapt of wisdom +2, cloak of resistance +2, scroll of invisibility, scroll of mirror image, scroll of teleport, boots of striding and springing, ring of counterspells*, silver holy symbol marked with verses of anathema worth 500 gp, master key to all locks in the Cathedral of Wee Jas.

Tactics: Ike casts *magic vestment* on his armor and shield and *greater magic weapon* on his sword twice a day each as long as he's waiting for the PCs to attack. The bonuses granted from these spells are included in the stat block above. He casts a *hero's feast* every morning as well between the hours of 7:00 and 8:00; if the PCs attack between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M., Ike and the other creatures in this room gain 1d8+6 temporary hit points, a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and Will saves, and immunity to fear effects and poison. These bonuses are *not* included in the stat block above.

Once Ike or his minions hear the sound of combat in the Great Hall, Ike takes the following actions unless there is an obviously better course of action available to him.

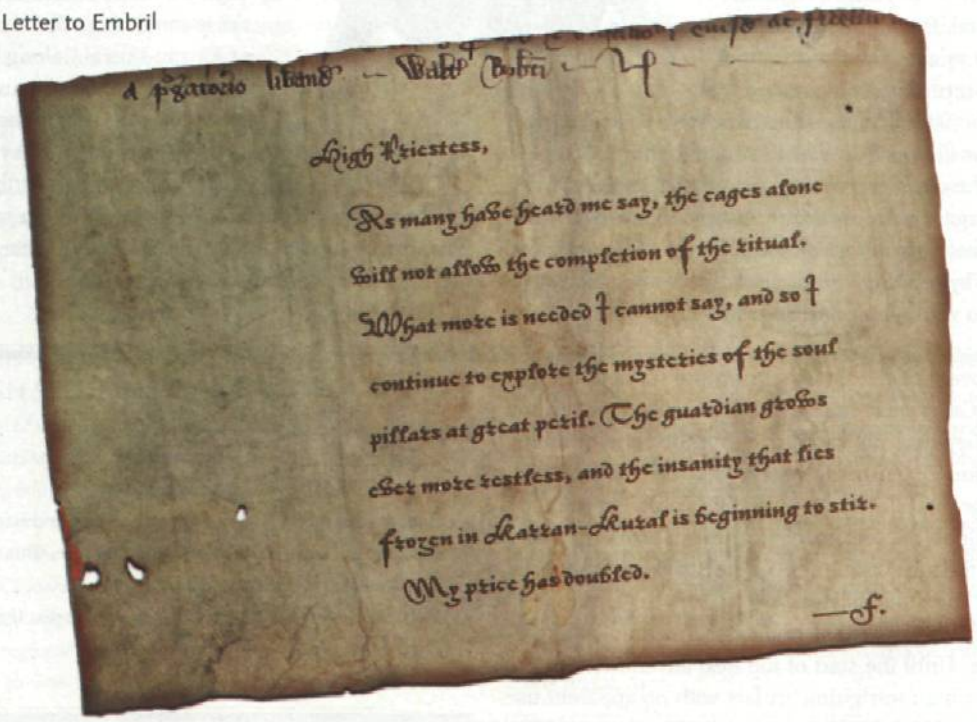
- *Round 1*: Casts *air walk* on self and starts walking up near the ceiling of the room.
- *Round 2*: Casts *death ward* on self, continues air walking.
- *Round 3*: Casts *bull's strength* on self, reaches ceiling and takes up a defensive position above the *soulcage*.
- *Round 4*: Casts *bear's endurance* on self, retrieves scroll of *invisibility* from pack.
- *Round 5*: Casts *invisibility* on self, retrieves scroll of *mirror image* from pack.
- *Round 6*: Casts *mirror image* on self.
- *Round 7*: Readies an action to cast *flame strike* on the PCs as they enter the room.

Once combat starts, the dread wraith and gray render zombies simply advance on the closest character and attack. The bone devil first attempts to separate one or two of the characters from the rest of the group using *walls of ice*, then advances on a lightly armored character or a character who's obviously an arcane spellcaster. It knows that these characters are more vulnerable to poison than hardier melee fighters, and attempts to take them out of the fight quickly with its poison and fear abilities.

The undead obey Ike's commands and fight to the death without hesitation. If pushed below 20% of his total hit points, the bone devil asks for quarter unless the fight is going extremely well for Ike and the undead.

Ike himself opens combat with his prepared *flame strike*. He casts his quickened *shield of faith* and *divine favor* over

Handout 1: Letter to Embril


High Priestess,
As many have heard me say, the cages alone
will not allow the completion of the ritual.
What more is needed I cannot say, and so I
continue to explore the mysteries of the soul
pillars at great peril. The guardian grows
ever more restless, and the insanity that lies
frozen in Kattan-Kutaf is beginning to stir.
My price has doubled.
—E.

the first two rounds of combat while he approaches close enough to cast *destruction* on a PC. He saves his quickened *inflict serious wounds* to cast on himself if he's badly wounded. He can also swap out his higher level spells to cast *mass inflict wounds* spells to heal himself and his undead minions while also damaging the PCs.

Development: The *soulcage* can yield a great deal of information to the PCs even though it has little value in its own right to anyone other than the Cagewrights. The *soulcage* is roughly the size of a coffin for a Medium humanoid, and despite the fact that it appears to be made of various kinds of rare metal weighs only 50 pounds.

SECRETS REVEALED

In the aftermath of the battle in the Cathedral of Wee Jas, the PCs have two obvious options open to them. They can openly claim that they were responsible for the killings inside the temple (justified, of course, because of the assassination attempt against them), or they can be discrete and cover up their involvement. Perhaps surprisingly, there are few repercussions from the events in the Cathedral. Even if the characters have no physical evidence that the assassins were sent by agents of Wee Jas, Ike's monstrous guards and their violent reactions to the PCs' visit are enough to persuade the city's overworked guards that the PCs once again were working in the defense of the city. Jenya can help greatly in smoothing over the reactions of the guards by offering to cast *speak with dead* spells on the assassins to verify their role as killers hired by the church of Wee Jas.

The recovery of the *soulcage* from the Cathedral represents the PCs' greatest step yet toward Cauldron's salvation, although they may not recognize it at the time. It doesn't take long for Vhalantru to realize that Ike foolishly kept this *soulcage* in a place where the PCs could get to it, and when he does he sets into motion a series of events detailed in the next installment of the Shackled City Adventure Path, "Lords of Oblivion."

But Vhalantru's reaction should occur behind the scenes at this time. Until the start of the next adventure, the PCs are faced with an intriguing artifact with no apparent use. If they decide to ignore the *soulcage* (or worse, leave it hanging in the Cathedral), they may miss out on several important clues that could lead them to the ruins of Karran-Kurral; in this case, you should consider introducing the location of the ruins in an alternate manner. Perhaps an agent of Wee Jas attacks to avenge Ike's death, and on his body the PCs discover a journal that contains oblique references to the *soulcage* and the ruins.

Researching the *Soulcage*: The *soulcage* radiates strong abjuration, conjuration, and necromancy magic and strong evil. The silver and gray bars of the cage twist in on themselves in strange and disturbing patterns. Anyone who examines the cage and makes a successful Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 25) realizes that the cage is associated with Carceri. Since it's a minor artifact, *identify* and *analyze dweomer* do not reveal the *soulcage's* functions. *Legend lore* or *vision* are much more informative, and reveal that the cage is a powerful focus for a ritual to establish a permanent portal between the Material Plane and Carceri. The spell indicates that this particular *soulcage* was built by a fire giant named Dugobras (from "The Demonskar Legacy"). It also reveals the *soulcage* has ties to something called the "soul pillars of Karran-Kurral," along with a short quote from an anonymous source: "An ancient hate stolen from the souls of the dead, the cage is but the key to a greater evil." Neither spell reveals further details of the ritual (such as the fact that this is actually a spare *soulcage*, that there are more *soulcages* needed to complete the ritual, or the role of the Shackleborn in the ritual).

TOMB-TAINTED SOUL

[General]

Your soul is tainted by the foul touch of undeath.

Prerequisite: Any non-good alignment.

Benefit: You are healed by negative energy and harmed by positive energy as if you were an undead creature. This feat gives no other penalties or benefits of the undead type.

This feat is from the upcoming *Libris Mortis: the Book of The Undead*, from Wizards of the Coast.

The ruins of Karran-Kurral, are not common knowledge, but a successful DC 25 Knowledge (history) check reveals that the ruins are part of an ancient spell weaver empire that dominated the area long ago. The Knowledge check also reveals that the ruins are believed to be near Cauldron, but not their exact location.

If the characters are unwilling or unable to cast the divination spells necessary to examine the *soulcage*, Jenya and any other allied NPCs urge them to continue investigating it if the matter is brought to their attention. If necessary, Jenya offers to handle the expense of paying an NPC spellcaster to cast *legend lore* to fully examine the *soulcage*, although if she is forced to do so her opinion of the PCs turns a little sour.

Finding Karran-Kural: Locating the spell weaver ruins that house the origin of the *soulcage* is impossible without magic, as there is no physical record of the ruins' existence outside of the ruin itself. If no PC can cast the spell, Jenya casts *find the path* on one of the characters to lead them to the entrance of the ruins.

Although the ruin is less than a mile underground, the only route to reach it is via a tangled maze of twisting volcanic tunnels that wind through the depths of the volcano for an overall length of about four miles. Complicating matters is the fact that these tunnels are flooded with water, in many places water with fairly strong currents equivalent to rough water (Swim check DC 15). PCs who can't easily navigate these tunnels by swimming can walk along the bottom at half speed, providing they carry enough gear to weigh themselves down (see page 92 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). At a speed of 15 feet a character takes nearly two and a half hours to reach the entrance of the ruins, so if the PCs have to rely on Jenya's *find the path* spell, they'll have just enough time to arrive at their destination, provided they set out immediately after she casts the spell.

CHAPTER 3: THE RUINS OF KARRAN-KURAL

Centuries ago, a mighty civilization of enigmatic creatures known as spell weavers delved deep below the volcano that now cradles the city of Cauldron. When a mighty cataclysm to the west transformed a spell weaver city into the smoking crater known now as the Demonskar, the spell weavers themselves faded from prominence. Traces of their might and cruel experiments linger on, however, and it was in one such ruin that the lore of the Cagewrights was born.

Driven by alien desires and a great understanding of necromantic magic, the spell weavers built a tomb designed to garner ever more insight into frozen death. In the twisted spell weaver mind, the forces of cold and death held some mystical connection, the understanding of which promised ever greater arcane power. Deep in the heart of the dormant volcano, the spell weavers built their insidious laboratory/tomb, where they blended the forces of necromantic magic, the magical essence of cold, and the undead flesh of members of their own race.

Had the spell weavers confined their experiments to nebulous arcane forces and their own willing dead, their sinister designs perhaps could have been excused, if not understood. But knowing neither conscience or mercy, the spell weavers used dead slaves and captives of other races in their necromantic rites as well.

The lore hidden in this tomb, called Karran-Kural by the spell weaver architects that built it, remains as vast as it is cruel, and it was here, nearly thirty years ago, that the Cagewrights laid their plans for Cauldron. In delving between the magical essences of ice and death, the spell weavers discovered a number of strange arcane formulae that dealt with the merging of worlds. From these secrets the Cagewrights extracted the genesis of the ritual that can transform Cauldron into a gate town. And it is upon the enigmatic principles and arcane formulae of the heartless spell weavers that the *soulcages* were built.

Although the bulk of the Cagewrights' efforts have long since shifted away from Karran-Kural, one powerful loremaster remains, plunging ever deeper into the dark and frozen secrets stored in the soul pillars of Karran-Kural. These soul pillars store the lore of the spell weavers and serve as the distant prototypes of the *soulcages* so essential to the Cagewrights' ritual. Should the characters succeed in exploring the ruins and thwarting the loremaster and the last deadly guardians left by the spell weavers, they gain

CAMPAIGN SEED: THE VENGEANCE OF WEE JAS

The Cathedral of Wee Jas in Cauldron has a long and powerful reach, and Ike Iverson's defeat and probable death draws the attention of her most powerful servants. Good and neutral worshipers of Wee Jas who look into the affair quickly learn that Ike and Embril were straying beyond the bounds of Wee Jas's portfolio, and therefore let the issue rest. However, the characters might find themselves beset by vengeance-hungry servants of the death goddess for years to come. Many regional powerful necromancers and undead creatures pay homage to Wee Jas. Although none are directly affiliated with the Cathedral, many stood to gain by the Cauldron sect's involvement with the Cagewrights. As the characters become a more and more visible force in Cauldron, they could well find themselves targeted by other powerful servants of Wee Jas.

Embril herself eventually returns to Cauldron, and serves as a featured antagonist in an upcoming installment of the Adventure Path. As such, hints of her whereabouts should be kept vague but intriguing, and the later adventure could benefit from a foreshadowing of her personal power and her mastery of both arcane and divine magic.

their first direct victory against the Cagewright conspiracy, however unintentional their victory might be.

The entire complex is lit by small panels set flush with the ceiling; these small panels shed a pale blue light equivalent to torchlight. The panels also cool the complex to a frigid 10° F. Characters unprepared for such cold temperatures must make a Fortitude save every hour that they remain within the ruins of Karran-Kural (DC 15 + 1 per previous check) or suffer 1d6 points of nonlethal damage on each failed save. See page 302 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on the effects of extreme cold. All of the creatures in the encounters below are either immune to the cold or wear sufficient clothing. The magic panels are part of the walls of the spell weaver tomb, and they lose all magical properties if removed. One panel is located in the ceiling of each five-foot square. The magic that powers the tiles functions at caster level 20; if dispelled, the tile simply ceases to function for 1d4 rounds. Only by destroying the majority (at least 80%) of the tiles will the temperature and lighting return to more natural levels. The effects of such a development on Karran-Kural are up to you.

The corridors in Karran-Kural are as wide as they are tall. Ceiling height in smaller rooms is usually ten feet, but can be much higher in the larger chambers. Doors are made of iron and covered with ancient runes and strange depictions of six-armed humanoids working great magic. Characters who saw the Hegemonic Plate from "The Demonskar Legacy" (*Dungeon* #104) can make a DC 15 Intelligence check to recognize the figures as the same creatures found on that plate. Characters already aware of Karran-Kural's origins and the connection between this and the ruins near Vaprak's Voice automatically recognize the figures.

One notable feature of the ruins are the numerous ice lattices. The locations of these lattices are indicated on the maps of the ruins. An ice lattice consists of one-inch thick strands of ice that crisscross from wall to wall at various angles. The spell weavers infused these lattices with the magical essences of cold and death, and the lattices carry these energies still. Anyone touching a strand of the lattice suffers 1d6 points of cold damage and 1d6 points of negative energy damage (no save). A character moving full speed through the lattice must make an Escape Artist check (DC 25) to avoid contacting a strand. Moving at half speed lowers the DC to 15, and moving extremely carefully (five feet per round or less), lowers the DC to 5.

Evil outsiders and undead can move through ice lattice strands with no ill effect. The ancient spell weavers wore magic rings that also allowed them to pass through the lattices, but none of these rings remain in the ruins today. The lattices are an innate defense of Karran-Kural, and if destroyed they reform completely within a week's time.

Magic Ceiling Panel: 1 ft. square, 6 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 45; Break DC 35.

Iron Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60, Break DC 28.

Ice Lattice: Hardness 5; hp 10 per five foot square; Break DC 25.

K1. ENTRANCE TO KARRAN-KURAL

Light: None.
Sound: Sloshing of water to the west (automatic).
Reaction: None.
Auras: None.

The ancient flooded lava tubes open here into a pair of smaller, air-filled tubes that lead to the east. The temperature drops alarmingly to the east, and the two passageways merge just before they are blocked by an enormous wall of ice. A narrow tunnel has been hacked through the ice near its southern edge, allowing access into a larger area beyond.

The ice wall is part of the ancient protections the spell weavers created to secure Karran-Kural from invasion. The Cagewrights managed to bore a narrow passageway through the ice wall, at which point its magic properties faded and it became a normal (but quite thick) wall of ice. Medium creatures can pass through the tunnel with ease, but larger creatures must squeeze. The ice itself remains frozen only due to the proximity of Karran-Kural, and if melted does not reform.

Beyond the wall of ice, a second barrier once existed. Again, the Cagewrights ruined this warding, leaving the once magic portcullis in a twisted heap that can be passed through with relative ease by creatures of up to Large size.

Beyond the ruined portcullis a large set of double doors is all that remains of the once formidable barriers that protected the ruins. These doors are not magic, nor are they locked.

K2. SPELL WEAVER COFFINS

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles), strong necromancy (spell weaver coffins).

Pale blue lights set flush in the ceiling light this hallway. The walls have a subtle curve, and the entire length is etched with disturbing images and symbols.

Strange glassy circles, each roughly 5 feet in diameter, checker the length of the hallway's floor. Under each disc, a six-armed humanoid figure hangs motionless as if suspended in fluid or encased in glass.

At each end of the hall, a pair of frost-rimed metal doors stands closed.

The circular panes in the floor are magic spell weaver coffins; each is actually a cylinder of magic ice that contains a frozen body of a spell weaver. Each cylinder weighs six tons and completely encases the spell weaver to a depth of 8 feet. The material loses much of its strength if taken beyond the magical energies that pervade the spell weaver ruins, reverting to normal ice in such a case.

The bodies in the coffins are not alive, nor are they dead. They are in a form of suspended animation, and remain so as long as the magic of the ruin persists. Every 1 to 6 minutes the characters spend within the ruin, one of the spell weaver corpses nearby jerks or moves in response to some strange twist in the magical energies of the complex. If the PCs aren't examining the coffin at this time, a successful Spot check (DC 20) allows them to notice the movement. As long as the bodies remain frozen, they pose no threat to the players. The strange behavior should set the tone of characters' exploration and emphasize the alien power of the spell weavers.

Roll	Corpse Behavior
1	Jerk violently away from the top of the coffin, seemingly recoiling from the nearest PC.
2	Pound violently but silently on the underside of the coffin's top pane.
3	The corpse's mouth opens as if in a powerful scream, but silence remains.
4	A thin wail escapes a coffin (Listen check DC 15 to notice).
5	The corpse calmly runs its fingers along the underside of the coffin's top pane.
6	The corpse's arms move languidly in patterns resembling arcane spellcasting.
7	The corpse folds all six of its arms as if in prayer.
8	The corpse violently tears at its own flesh, without apparent effect.

Each coffin is essentially a minor artifact (caster level 20). They can be destroyed with enough damage, at which point any remaining ice and dead flesh melt away into a foul-smelling but otherwise harmless black mist.

Spell Weaver Coffin: Hardness 12; hp 90; Break DC 36.

K3. THE ICE PRISON (EL 13)

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles), moderate evocation (*walls of ice*), strong evocation (ice lattice).
Evil: Overwhelming (ice devil).

This chamber is nearly circular, although two sides are made flat by thick walls of ice. The entire room is filled with a lattice of thin icy strands, each flickering with faint magical energies.

Two ice walls block two of the exits from this room. These walls are identical to the *wall of ice* spell (caster level 20), save that they affect only the area shown on the map. When a wall is broken, a plane of frigid air remains where the wall stood. Creatures passing through this plane of air suffer 1d6+20 cold damage (no save, spell resistance applies). The zone of frigid air remains for 20 minutes.

The walls are an innate defense of Karran-Kural; if destroyed they reform completely within a week's time.

Walls of Ice: 3 ft. thick; Hardness 0; hp 36; Break DC 35.

Creature: This chamber houses an ancient and insane guardian, an ice devil bound to defend the ruins by the spell weavers. Having lived in isolation for ages, Izzaedruzz now lies in wait for any who might try to enter the compound. When the Cagewrights first entered the ruin, they lost several soldiers to the devil, and on further expeditions they used teleportation magic to bypass the room entirely.

Izzaedruzz, Male Ice Devil: hp 153, *Monster Manual* 56.

Tactics: Izzaedruzz attempts to split up intruders with *walls of ice* so he can fight them one at a time to take maximum advantage of the slowing effect of his icy spear.

Although Izzaedruzz has the full use of his abilities, he can only *teleport* within the confines of this room and the nearby corridors (both areas labeled K2). If overmatched, Izzaedruzz buys time by cowering behind *walls of ice* to regenerate.

Izzaedruzz can move at full speed without risking damage from the ice lattice.

K4. THE FROZEN STAIRCASE

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles).

The south end of the corridor ends in a staircase choked in rubble and ice. Determined characters could possibly dig their way through it down to a lower level, but the features of this area are beyond the scope of this adventure.

K5. THE SCRYING LATTICE

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles and scrying lattice (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles), strong divination (scrying lattice).

Six doors line the north and south walls of this passageway, three to a side. The hall itself ends at a tangled lattice of icy strands that flicker and writhe with cold blue tendrils of light.

The icy lattice at the end of the hallway is a powerful scrying device built ages ago by the spell weavers. If properly identified (using *identify* or *analyze dweomer*), the lat-

tice can be used to cast *scrying* once per day as the spell cast by a 13th-level caster. The lattice is bound to the structure of Karran-Kural, and it cannot be moved intact. However, the lattice regrows and repairs itself in one week's time if damaged. The Cagewrights have used this lattice often to scry upon their enemies.

Scrying Lattice: Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25.

K6. CELLS OF DESPAIR

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles), strong necromancy (spell weaver coffins).

This chamber is empty, save for a set of four of the ubiquitous circular discs set into the floor.

Each of these rooms houses four spell weaver coffins put to special purpose. Unlike the other coffins, they contain corpses of elves. The spell weavers thought to plumb the nature of despair by entombing the elves in this way, binding the corpses with physical and magical restraints that tugged against the very souls of the dead elves. These horrid rites left the elven souls trapped in a state of eternal despair. Anyone in the chamber must make a successful Will save (DC 15) each round or be so overcome by despair that they find it hard to summon the will to act. This effect is exactly like the *slow* spell cast by a 15th-level wizard, except that it is a supernatural mind-affecting, enchantment effect. The *slow* effect lasts for 10 minutes.

A cleric who can channel positive energy can release these trapped souls with a successful Turn Undead check. Each trapped soul (one per coffin) effectively has 15 Hit Dice for purposes of determining success or failure for turning checks. Successfully releasing a trapped soul fills the room with a momentary pulse of powerful energy, and any creature in the room at this time gains the benefit of an empowered, maximized *aid* spell (caster level 15). Multiple freed souls extend the duration of any existing *aid* effects by fifteen minutes, but the other effects of the spell do not stack.

K7. CELLS OF AGONY

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles), strong necromancy (spell weaver coffins).

This chamber is empty, save for a set of four of the ubiquitous circular discs set into the floor.

Each of these coffins contain the corpse of a sturdy dwarf. The spell weavers used their fearful magic to trap these dwarves in a state of constant pain, and like the elven souls trapped in area **K6**, they project these feelings even though they have been dead for centuries. Any living creature in the room must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 15) each round or be overcome by agony and gain a –5 circumstance penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks for the next minute. This is a supernatural necromantic effect.

The dwarven souls can be released in the same manner and with the same results as the elven souls in area **K6**.

K8. CELLS OF SOLITUDE

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles), strong necromancy (spell weaver coffins).

> This chamber is empty, save for a single circular disc set into the floor.

These two rooms each house a single spell weaver coffin. Although the spell weaver bodies laid to rest here underwent significant magical treatment, the experiments performed here were failures in the eyes of the spell weavers (unlike those in areas **K6** and **K7**, which they deemed a success). Plunged into frigid and eternal isolation, the spell weaver soul imprisoned within the single coffin in each room was intended to illuminate the magical essence of solitude and bring the spell weaver arcanists even greater power. However, even after long years of study the spell weavers were unable to glean any useful knowledge from the trapped souls. Unlike the elven and dwarven souls in the prior areas, these souls are permanently bound to their coffins and can be released only through the destruction of the coffin itself, as detailed in area **K2**.

Spell Weaver Coffin: Hardness 12; hp 90; Break DC 36.

K9. PIT ROOM (EL 13)

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles).

> This barren room contains only one unusual feature; a smooth-sided, five-foot-diameter pit descends into the floor against the west wall.

The pit in the floor wall leads 20 feet down to the second level of the Karran-Kural ruins, to area **K10**. The pit was created with a pair of *disintegrate* spells by a Cagewright many years ago when they realized that the section of ruins they sought lay directly below this chamber. The walls of the pit are perfectly smooth.

Creature: An ancient iron golem guards this room, and once a fight begins it pursues characters as far as area **K3**. The golem itself is an ice-rimed relic from the ancient dominion of the spell weavers, yet it continues to fulfill its duties as guardian.

Iron Golem: hp 135, *Monster Manual* 136.

Development: The ice devil imprisoned in area **K1** long ago learned to leave the golem alone, and should the characters manage to get both involved in the same encounter, the ice devil avoids the golem and uses its *cone of cold* ability to stay at range and harass the characters while they tangle with the construct.

K10. RUINED CHAMBER

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles).

> The walls of this partially collapsed room are blasted and pitted from some ancient calamity. The room's collapse is total to the north, a solid wall of frozen stone. A smooth-sided pit rises up from the ceiling near the east wall.

The opening in the ceiling leads up twenty feet to area **K9**.

K11. CAGEWRIGHT GUARDIAN (EL 13)

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles), strong evocation (ice lattice).
Evil: Overwhelming (kelubar demodand).

> This large room is filled with a tangled lattice of icy strands and beams that stretch from wall to wall, floor to ceiling, and everywhere in between.

This entire room is filled with a massive ice lattice similar to those found in other areas of the ruins.

Creature: The Cagewrights knew that it was extremely unlikely that an enemy would discover the ruins of Karran-Kural, but nor did they want to trust the obscure location alone to the site's defense. A powerful Cagewright wizard called up a denizen of Carceri to guard the ruin, and used a hedged prison from a *binding* spell to insure the kelubar demodand would remain a guardian of the ruins forever. The *binding* spell prevents the kelubar from leaving this room or any of the adjoining hallways. And since the kelubar is filled with rage over its predicament, anyone who enters the room is seen as an enemy. The other Cagewrights typically use *teleport* to travel directly to one of

the nearby rooms, and so avoid confrontations with the kelubar entirely.

The kelubar demodands are the bureaucrats of a legion of self-appointed keepers of the Carcerian population. This kelubar, Olarithusk, is typical for his race; an obese 8-foot-tall humanoid with knobby skin coated with a pale green slime.

Olarithusk, Male Kelubar Demodand: CR 13; Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar); HD 13d8+39; hp 104; Init +5; Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +13; Grp +18; Atk +18 melee (1d4+5 plus 1d6 acid, claw); Full Atk +18 melee (1d4+5 plus 1d6 acid, 2 claws) and +16 melee (1d6+2 plus 1d6 acid, bite); SA acidic slime, sneak attack +4d6, spell-like abilities, stench, *summon demodand*; SQ acid immunity, cold immunity, damage reduction 15/good, evasion, fire immunity, outsider traits, poison immunity, spell resistance 25, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 20, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18.

Acidic Slime (Ex): The slime secreted by a kelubar adds 1d6 points of acid damage to its melee attacks. On a successful critical hit, it deals an additional 1d10 points of acid damage.

Stench (Ex): All creatures (except other demodands) within 30 feet of a kelubar must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 19) or be nauseated as long as the creature remains in the area, and for 10 rounds after the creature leaves. A successful save means that the creature is immune to that kelubar's stench for one day.

***Summon Demodand* (Sp)**: Olarithusk can attempt to summon 1d2 kelubars with a 40% chance of success.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect magic, clairaudience/clairvoyance, fear* (DC 18), *invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, spider climb, tongues*; 3/day—*fog cloud, ray of enfeeblement*; 2/day *acid fog, dispel magic*. Effective caster level 13th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Skills: Bluff +24, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +28, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Gather Information +6, Hide +9, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (the planes) +18, Listen +18, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +22, Spot +18, Survival +2 (+4 on other planes).

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Multiattack, Spring Attack.

Languages: Common, Abyssal, Demodand.

K12. THE SCRYING CHAMBER (EL 14)

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).

Sound: None.

Reaction: None.

Auras: Faint abjuration (one of Fetor's rings), faint conjuration (Fetor's potion), faint evocation (ceiling tiles), faint transmutation (Fetor's headband and amulet), moderate abjuration (Fetor's cloak), moderate conjuration (one of Fetor's scrolls), moderate enchantment (one of Fetor's scrolls), moderate evocation (one of Fetor's rings), strong divination (scrying ice), strong no school (Fetor's rod).

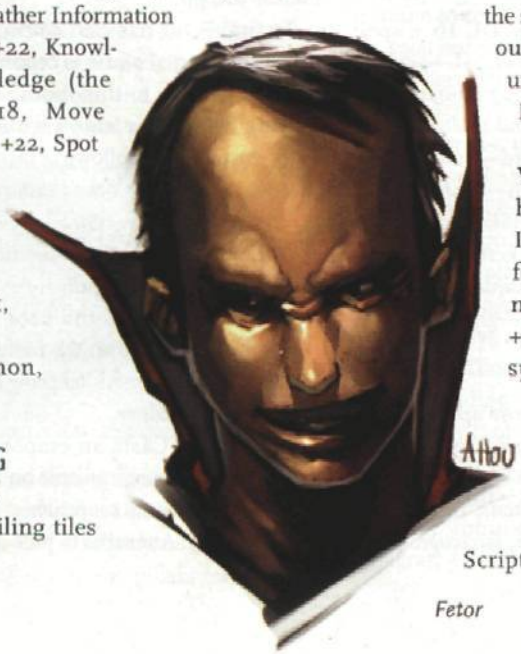
- **Evil**: Moderate (Fetor).

> This perfectly circular room is featureless save for an irregular smear of black ice that covers the center of the floor. Even from a distance the ice seems filled with distant and shadowy images.

The center of the room holds a potent magic device that allows the user to scry. A single Cagewright loremaster, a cruel and selfish man named Fetor Abradius, spends his days here *scrying* and contemplating the lore of the spell weavers. He has already mastered much of the lore of the soul pillars, but he has no plans of leaving until every scrap of the spell weavers' powerful lore is his.

The inky black ice patch in the center of the room is a more powerful version of the scrying lattice found in area **K5**. It can be used to cast *scrying* three times per day (caster level 20th). The ice is bound to the structure of Karran-Kural, and it cannot be moved intact. It regrows and repairs itself in one week's time if damaged.

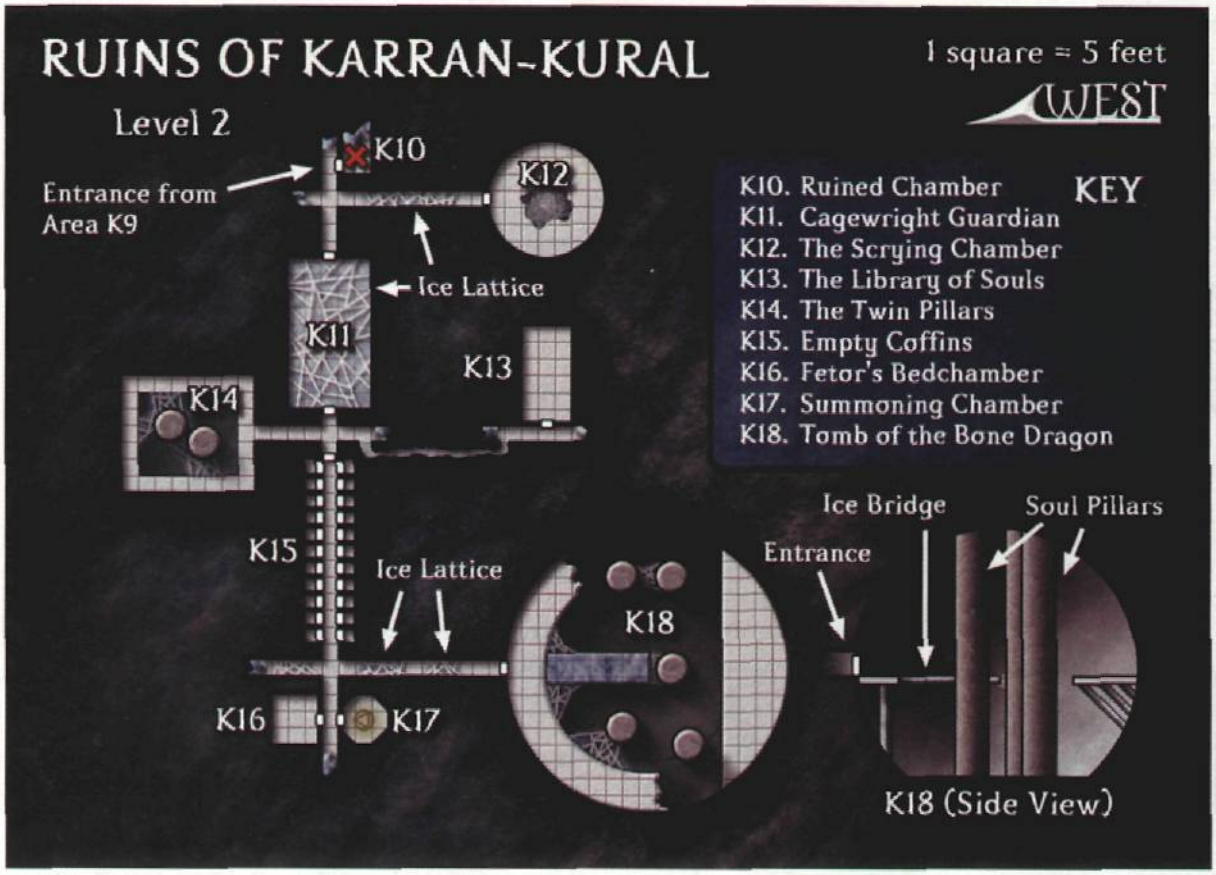
Creature: Fetor Abradius remains a Cagewright only in name. Convinced that the spell weaver lore offers far more potential power than the Cagewrights initially estimated, Fetor remained here with the few servants that his allies and masters allowed him, and continued to bargain with the dracolich in area **K18** for access to the soul pillars. Fetor uses the scrying ice to gather information about the outside world and report it to the mighty undead dragon. The dracolich in turn allows Fetor to study the soul pillars.



Fetor

Fetor Abradius, Male Human, Wiz7/Loremaster 7: CR 14; Medium humanoid (human); HD 14d4+28; hp 64; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +6, Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4–1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +5/+0 melee (1d4–1/19–20, dagger); SA spells; SQ applicable knowledge, dodge trick, greater lore +13, lore of true stamina, more newfound arcana; AL NE; Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +14; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 22, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Concentration +19, Decipher Script +23, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowl-



edge (nature) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Knowledge (the planes) +23, Spellcraft +25 (+27 with scrolls), Use Magic Device +11 (+13 with scrolls).

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item, Death Frost Spell (see sidebar), Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Spell Focus (necromancy).

Languages: Common, Abyssal, Demodand, Infernal, Spell Weaver.

Spells Prepared (4/6/7/5/5/4/4/2; save DC 16 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (2), *light*, *mage hand*; 1st—*alarm**, comprehend *languages*, *mage armor**, *magic missile* (2), *shield*; 2nd—*blindness/deafness* (3), *command undead*, *bear's endurance*, *mirror image*, *see invisibility*; 3rd—*halt undead*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch* (2); 4th—*confusion* (2), *dimension door* (2), *enervation*; 5th—*dominate person*, *lightning bolt* (empowered), *magic missile* (quickened), *vampiric touch* (empowered); 6th—*circle of death*, *disintegrate*, *greater dispel magic*, *mirror image* (quickened); 7th—*greater teleport*, *lightning bolt* (quickened).

*This spell is already cast.

Spellbooks: Fetor's spellbooks contain those spells he has prepared plus the following: 0—all cantrips; 1st—*charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *identify*; 4th—*animate dead*, *scrying*; 5th—*cone of cold*, *teleport*, *wall of stone*; 6th—*create undead*; 7th—*control undead*, *finger of death*, *forcecage*.

Familiar: Because Fetor has seven loremaster levels that do not contribute to a familiar's power, he chooses not to keep one, seeing it more as a vulnerability than an asset.

Possessions: *Ring of counterspells* (*dispel magic*), *metamagic rod of lesser empower spell*, *ring of protection +2*, *headband of intellect +2*, *amulet of natural armor +2*, *cloak of resistance +3*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *scroll of dominate person*, *scroll of dimension door*, dagger, spell component pouch, spellbooks, 300 gp.

Tactics: Fetor has cast *alarm* and *mage armor* ahead of time. The mental *alarm* is centered on the mid-point of the passage leading to this room. In the likely even that the players trigger the *alarm* while approaching the room, Fetor employs the following tactics.

- Round 1: Casts *bear's endurance* and quickened *mirror image*.
- Round 2: Casts *see invisibility* and draws *metamagic rod of lesser empower spell*.
- Round 3: Opens the door and casts an empowered *lightning bolt* down the hallway. If foes are still alive he casts a quickened *lightning bolt* and takes a 5-foot step behind the door.
- Round 4: Casts an empowered *magic missile* and a quickened *magic missile* on a divine spellcaster.
- Round 5: Casts *confusion*.
- Round 6: Attempts to pick off stragglers with *vampiric touch*.

K13. THE LIBRARY OF SOULS (EL 10)

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles), strong necromancy and strong evocation (library corpses).

- **Evil:** Strong (library corpses).

> Fifteen corpses stand frozen in place, equally spaced along the length of this rectangular room. From head to toe, the corpses are covered in faintly glowing blue runes.

The room holds fifteen corpses; five each of dwarves, elves, and humans. Each is covered with spell weaver runes and glyphs. Anyone who successfully reads the glyphs learns that the corpses record the history of Karran-Kural and its spell weaver creators. The history is brief, but it outlines the spell weaver belief that a fundamental connection exists between the magical essences of death and cold and that the tomb was built to explore that strange connection.

Trap: The door to this room is locked with an amazing lock (Open Lock DC 40), and trapped with a powerful energy-draining trap. The trap activates as soon as anyone tries to open the door.

***Energy Drain* Trap:** CR 10, magic device; visual trigger (true seeing); automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged touch; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17th-level wizard, 2d4 negative levels for 24 hours, DC 23 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

K14. THE TWIN PILLARS (EL 13)

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint abjuration (Orgo's full plate), faint conjuration (Orgo's potion), faint evocation (ceiling tiles), faint transmutation (Orgo's greataxe, gauntlets, and amulet), strong necromancy and strong evocation (soul pillars).

> This room descends 20 feet below the level of the entry corridor and rises to a height of 40 feet above it. A 10-foot-wide walkway runs around the outside of the room. This rectangular room is dominated by two large pillars, each made of what looks like gray necrotic flesh. The chill in the room emanates from these pillars, and now and again a tortured visage forms and then fades on a pillar's surface with a faint whisper.

This rectangular room holds two soul pillars; horrid repositories of the spell weaver's lore. Unlike those in area K18, the soul pillars in this room hold only minor repositories of knowledge. Activating one of the pillars requires 10 minutes of concentration and a successful Intelligence check (DC 10). Anyone successfully activating these pillars can ask a series of questions of the undead spirits trapped within. The tortured spirits impart knowledge in the form of answers to yes/no questions, just as if the character had cast *contact outer plane* to contact a demideity. The character using the pillar must make a second Intelligence check to avoid Intelligence and Charisma loss just as if he had cast *contact outer plane*.

Creatures: Two powerful creatures (brought here with the help of Wee Jas clerics) now serve the Cagewright loremaster Fetor. They stay in this room to study the soul pillars at Fetor's orders.

Orgo Blacksword, Male Fiendish Half-Orc Ftr9: CR 11; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 9d10+18; hp 67; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9, Grp +14; Atk +17 melee (1d12+10/19–20/×3, +1 *greataxe*); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d12+10/19–20/×3, +1 *greataxe*); SA smite good 1/day (+9 melee damage); SQ damage reduction 10/magic, resistance to cold and fire 10, SR 14; AL LE; Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 21, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +12.

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (greataxe), Improved Critical (greataxe), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe).

Languages: Infernal.

Possessions: *+1 full plate, +1 greataxe, gauntlets of ogre power, amulet of natural armor +1, potion of cure serious wounds*, 250 gp.

Xail, Bone Naga: CR 11; Large undead; HD 15d12; hp 97; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7, Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (2d4+3 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +9 melee (2d4+3 plus poison, sting) and +4 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA poison, spells; SQ detect thoughts, guarded thoughts, immune to cold, damage reduction 5/slashing or bludgeoning, spell resistance 23, telepathy, undead; AL LE; Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 13, Con —, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 17.

Poison (Ex): Bite: Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Strength. Sting: Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Constitution. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

***Detect Thoughts* (Su):** A bone naga can continually detect the thoughts of those around it. This ability functions as the *detect thoughts* spell (caster level 9th; Will save DC 15), and it is always active.

Guarded Thoughts (Ex): Nagas are immune to any form of mind reading.

Telepathy (Su): A bone naga can communicate telepathically with any creature within 250 feet that has a language.

Skills: Bluff +21, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +7, Hide +15, Intimidate +23, Listen +20, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +21, Spot +20.

Feats: Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Empower Spell, Spell Focus (evocation).

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/6/6/5/3; save DC 13 + spell level); 0—*acid splash, arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, message, open/close, read magic*; 1st—*charm person, expeditious retreat, magic missile*, ray of enfeeblement, shield*; 2nd—*knock, mirror image, see invisibility, scorching ray*, spider climb*; 3rd—*displacement, haste, fireball*, icefane corpse***; 4th—*displacement, Evard's black tentacles, ice storm*, wall of ice**; 5th—*cone of cold*, overland flight, wall of force**; 6th—*Bigby's forceful hand*, necrotic mist***; 7th—*waves of exhaustion*.

*Evocation Spell. The base save DC for these spells is 14 + spell level.

**New spell. See Appendix 2: The Lore of the Spell Weavers.

Tactics: In the likely event that the keen-eared bone naga becomes aware of the party before they become aware of it or Orgo, Xail casts *displacement* on itself and Orgo before the fight starts, following with *shield, overland flight,* and *spider climb* on itself. It casts *haste* on Orgo on the first round of combat, and then follows that the next round with *Evard's black tentacles,* attempting to trap most of the party in the corridor leading into the room. Xail then uses *wall of force* to contain the group within the area covered by the tentacles and *Bigby's forceful hand* to push anyone who escapes back into the tentacle-covered area. If possible, it lays a *necrotic mist* on top of the tentacles area and then blasts the group with empowered evocation spells such as *cone of cold* and *fireball*. If the tactic works, Xail uses *waves of exhaustion* and *ray of enfeeblement* to ensure that the characters remain trapped by the tentacles. Xail uses multiple *Evard's black tentacles* if necessary. Orgo knows this strategy and how deadly it can be, so he works to engage characters at the edge of the tentacle- and *necrotic mist*-covered area, hopefully preventing them from leaving the reach of the tentacles without exposing himself to their grasp.

K15. EMPTY COFFINS

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).
Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles).

> This long hallway is lined with numerous iron doors, each of which is choked over with ice.

Each door opens into a small cell that houses an empty spell weaver coffin; an empty cylindrical hole in the floor about five feet in diameter and eight feet deep. Other than this, the rooms are bare and featureless. The Cagewrights used these rooms to store supplies, and there's a 10% chance per room that some mundane supplies (torches, dried food, frozen water, tools, etc.) remain in the empty coffin.

K16. FETOR'S BEDCHAMBER

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).

Sound: None.
Reaction: To creatures entering the room and triggering the *alarm*—Fetor takes two rounds to cast defensive spells as detailed in the Tactics section for area **K12** and then uses *dimension door* to come here to investigate.
Auras: Faint abjuration (*alarm*), faint evocation (ceiling tiles).

The original purpose for this chamber is unclear, but someone has certainly been using it recently as a campsite. A simple bed sits against the wall opposite a desk and chair. Large stacks of paper are piled on the desk.

Fetor sleeps and compiles notes in this chamber, but lately he's been spending the vast majority of his time in area **K12**. He moves back and forth between this room and area **K12** via dimension door to save time and avoid the demodand in area **K11**. He used a scroll of *permanency* to make an *alarm* spell permanent here; if his room is entered, the alarm is triggered and he quickly comes to investigate.

Although Fetor carries his material wealth and spellbooks on his person, the papers on his desk contain extensive and valuable notes on the nature of the ruins, the soul pillars, and the Cagewrights themselves. These notes are complex, disorganized, and hold the observations of a cruel and subtle mind. Little can be gleaned from the notes upon casual study, but a character who studies the notes and makes a successful Decipher Script check can learn much. The information gained depends on the result of this check; each check requires eight hours of work. The PCs may well need to bring these notes to a friendly NPC who is skilled at Decipher Script to learn all there is to know from the notes. Meerthan is probably their best bet for this task.

- **DC 25**: Insight into the nature of the soul pillars to gain a +6 circumstance bonus on any Intelligence-based attempts made to retrieve knowledge.
- **DC 30**: The knowledge that a group called the Cagewrights seeks to put the *soulcages* to use in a powerful ritual. (However, the notes contain no details on individual Cagewrights or the group's final motives.)
- **DC 35**: The Cagewrights' ritual requires the presence of the Shackleborn, individuals born with a special invisible birthmark. An image of this birthmark appears in the text as well.

K17. SUMMONING CHAMBER

Light: Dim light from ceiling tiles (shadowy illumination).

Birthmark of the Shackleborn

Sound: None.
Reaction: None.
Auras: Faint evocation (ceiling tiles), moderate abjuration (summoning circle).

This empty chamber contains an intricate pentagram carved into the stony floor and inlaid with some form of metal. The pentagram seems to be empty.

The pentagram is a permanent *magic circle against evil* (focused inward) that the spell weavers used for their summoning rituals and similar rites.

K18. TOMB OF THE BONE DRAGON (EL 16)

Light: None.
Sound: None.
Reaction: To triggering of *alarm* spell, Vittriss Bale readies for combat.
Auras: Strong necromancy and strong evocation (soul pillars).
Evil: Overwhelming (Vittriss Bale).
Undead: Overwhelming (Vittriss Bale).

This room opens into a massive dome. A wide but broken walkway circles about a third of the room's circumference, and a thick ice bridge extends away from the door into the center of the room. Five massive pillars, composed of gray and necrotic flesh, stretch from the floor to the ceiling.

This huge chamber is the last great repository of spell weaver lore. It houses five massive soul pillars and is protected by a powerful dracolich, the most dangerous undead guardian the spell weavers ever created. The room itself has

CAMPAIGN SEED: A LINGERING NEMESIS

Gifted with remarkable intelligence and cruelty, Fetor Abradius is not about to let his work or his life fall to a band of adventurers. Should the PCs gain the advantage, Fetor does not hesitate to make use of his *greater teleport* spell to flee. Given time to animate undead servants, hire a bodyguard or two, and learn spells targeted at the characters' weaknesses, the evil loremaster could become a dangerous recurring foe.

an almost spherical shape, excepting only its level floor. The only door to the chamber opens in the middle of the western wall onto a broken walkway that runs about a third of the circumference of the room. A dangerous ice bridge leads out to the mid-point central soul pillar, and a solid platform.

The ice bridge is nearly 10 feet thick, and can easily support the weight of the characters and the dracolich. Characters can move across the bridge at half speed with no trouble, but moving at full speed requires a Balance check (DC 15) or the creature falls prone.

A small ice lattice anchors the bridge and one of the soul pillars. The strands fill only a small area and are easily avoided, but characters touching one of the strands deliberately suffer the effects described at the start of this chapter.

Creature: Vittriss Bale is a powerful dracolich. Cruel and dangerous in life, centuries of boredom and imprisonment have made him even more so. Fetor, the Cagewright loremaster with whom the dracolich has formed a tenuous alliance, is careful never to enter the room without first declaring his presence and ensuring that the dracolich is willing to let him examine the soul pillars unharmed.

Vittriss Bale, Male Adult Green Dracolich: CR 16; Huge undead (air); HD 20d12, hp 130; Init +0, Init +1; Spd 40 ft., swim 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 30, touch 8, flat-footed 29; Base Atk +20; Grp +38; Atk +28 melee (4d6+10 plus 1d6 cold, bite), Full Atk +28 melee (4d6+10 plus 1d6 cold, bite) and +28 melee (2d6+5 plus 1d6 cold, 2 claws) and +28 melee (1d8+5+1d6 cold, 2 wings) and +28 melee (2d6+15+1d6 cold, tail slap); Space/Reach 15ft./10ft. (bite 15 ft.); SA breath weapon, control undead, frightful presence, paralyzing gaze, paralyzing touch, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ damage reduction 5/bludgeoning and magic, darkvision 120 ft., immune to acid, cold, electricity, sleep, paralysis, and polymorph, invulnerability, low-light vision, spell resistance 24, undead, water breathing; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +14; Str 31, Dex 12, Con —, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 22.

Skills: Bluff +29, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Hide +0, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (nature) +26, Listen +25, Move Silently +20, Search +23, Sense Motive +11, Spot +25, Swim +18.

Feats: Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Multiattack*, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack, Power Attack, Tempest Breath*.

* From the *Draconomicon*. See Appendix 1: *Draconomicon* Feats.

Languages: Common, Infernal, Draconic, Spell Weaver.

Breath Weapon (Su): 50-ft. cone, damage 12d6 acid, Reflex DC 26 half. The save DC is Charisma-based.

***Control Undead* (Sp)**: Once every three days, Vittriss Bale can use *control undead* as the spell (caster level 15th). Vittriss cannot cast other spells while this ability is in effect.

Frightful Presence (Ex): 180-ft. radius, HD 19 or less, Will DC 26 negates.

Invulnerability (Su): If Vittriss Bale is slain, his spirit immediately returns to his phylactery, from where it may attempt to possess a suitable corpse.

Paralyzing Gaze (Su): Paralysis for 2d6 rounds, 40 ft., Fortitude DC 26 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based. If the saving throw is successful, the character is forever immune to the gaze of this particular dracolich.

Paralyzing Touch (Su): A creature struck by any of Vittriss Bale's physical attacks must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 26) or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*suggestion* (DC 19). Caster level 6th.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7*/5; save DC 16 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, detect magic, mage hand, open/close, message, read magic*; 1st—*alarm, mage armor, shield, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd—*mirror image, spider climb*.

*Vittriss Bale keeps an *alarm* spell cast on the corridor leading to this chamber, so assume that he has cast two of his 1st-level spells before he even begins prepping for the combat with the characters.

Tactics: Despite his long isolation and mental instability, Vittriss retains his cruelty and combat skill. When Vittriss becomes aware of the PCs, he readies himself with *mage armor, shield, mirror image*, and *spider climb*. He then clings to the wall above the door and waits to surprise the characters. Vittriss is careful to use the room's terrain to his advantage, capitalizing on his ability to fly and cling to the walls with the *spider climb* spell.

Treasure: The spell weavers saw fit to furnish their captive dracolich with a small horde of treasure. At the bottom of the room, amid the ice and rubble, the characters find 5,361 gp, 1,739 pp, 5 small diamonds (925 gp each), 5 large diamonds (1,500 gp each), three platinum rings set with diamonds (1,750 gp each), a platinum scepter set with emeralds (5,000 gp), and a matching platinum crown set with emeralds (7,000 gp). They also find two magic items: an *amulet of health* +2 and a +2 *keen bastard sword*.

Development: Having been created, bound, and isolated by the spell weavers, Vittriss Bale has never had the chance to stow a draconic corpse for possession should he be defeated. If killed, the dracolich's spirit retreats to its phylactery, a small jewel-inlaid silver box worth 2,500 gp. It remains trapped in the phylactery until a dragon corpse is brought within 90 feet, at which point he can possess the corpse and reform his true body in 2d4 days. If the phylactery is destroyed or rendered nonmagic, Vittriss Bale is forever destroyed.

Vittriss Bale's Phylactery: Hardness 20, hp 40, Break DC 40.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

"Secrets of the Soul Pillars" ends when the PCs defeat Vittriss Bale and gain access to the soul pillars of Karran-Kural. They should have learned during the course of the

adventure that the temple of Wee Jas is up to something sinister, but more importantly, they should have learned of the Cagewrights and their plans for Cauldron. If the PCs report this knowledge to their NPC friends, these allies become quite distraught and concerned. Many of them begin their own research into what's going on behind the scenes in Cauldron, and some of the information they soon uncover plays a major role in the next adventure in this series, "Lords of Oblivion." If the PCs' enemies learn of this information, nothing much changes. Vhalantru and the Cagewrights have already decided that something must be done now to stop the PCs, and are already taking actions to solve this situation once and for all. The PCs may or may not realize it, but they will soon come under the direct attack of the Cagewrights themselves.

Until then, the PCs should now have some time to rest, relax, create magic items, and otherwise recover from the trials they have endured in the Cathedral of Wee Jas and the ruins of Karran-Kural.

APPENDIX 1: DRACONOMICON FEATS

The Improved Multiattack and the Tempest Breath feats first appeared in the *Draconomicon*.

IMPROVED MULTIATTACK [GENERAL]

You are particularly adept at using all of your natural weapons at once.

Prerequisites: Three or more natural weapons, Multiattack.

Benefit: Your secondary attacks with natural weapons have no penalty on the attack roll. You still add only 1/2 your Strength bonus, if any, to damage dealt.

Normal: Without this feat, your secondary natural attacks are made at a –5 penalty (or a –2 penalty if you have the Multiattack feat).

TEMPEST BREATH [METABREATH]

You can make your breath weapon strike with the force of a windstorm.

Prerequisites: Str 13, breath weapon, Power Attack, size Large or larger.

Benefit: When you use your breath weapon, in addition to its normal effects, creatures in the area are affected as though struck by wind effects. The force of the wind depends on your size, as indicated below. For the effects of high winds, see Table 3–24 on page 95 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Dragon Size	Wind Force
Large	Severe
Huge	Windstorm
Gargantuan	Hurricane
Colossal	Tornado

Because your breath weapon has an instantaneous duration, creatures ignore the checked effect unless they are airborne (in which case they are blown back 1d6×5 feet).

When you use this feat, add +1 to the number of rounds you must wait before using your breath weapon again.

APPENDIX 2: SPELL WEAVER LORE

The spell weavers built the tomb complex called Karran-Kural to study the relationship between death and cold, and to turn this knowledge to their one passion—magical power. Although the true fruits of this research might well be lost, the malignant auras of the entombed spell weavers, the unwholesome lore that resides in the necrotic pillars, and the strange magical energies that suffuse the ruin itself still propagate a small fraction of their discoveries.

This lore comprises two feats and three spells, all of which are described below. Once a creature has spent at least a day in the ruins of Karran-Kural, the feats and spells become available options, provided the creature has the requisite levels and abilities.

DEATH FROST SPELL [METAMAGIC]

Your mastery of necromantic magic combined with your understanding of the strange energies that suffuse the ruins of Karran-Kural allow you to enhance necromancy spells so that they inflict cold damage in addition to their normal effects.

Prerequisites: Spell Focus (necromancy), must have spent at least 1 day in the ruins of Karran-Kural.

Benefit: A Death Frost spell inflicts an extra 2d6 points of cold damage against any creature affected by the spell. If the spell allows a saving throw to partially or completely resist its effects, the same saving throw applies to the extra cold damage. For example, *ghoul touch* allows a Fortitude save to resist its effects completely, and therefore a successful save against a Death Frost *ghoul touch* negates both the extra cold damage and the spell's regular effects. If the enhanced spell has lingering effects, the extra cold damage occurs only at the onset of the spell's effects. Spells enhanced by Death Frost gain the cold descriptor. A Death Frost spell uses up a spell slot one level higher than the spell's actual level.

FLESH OF THE ICE TOMB [GENERAL]

Your exposure to the strange energies that suffuse the ruins of Karran-Kural and long hours of near masochistic exposure to extreme cold have left your death-tainted flesh highly resistant to cold. You easily resist the damage caused by even extreme or magical cold.

Prerequisites: Tomb-Tainted Soul (from *Libris Mortis*), Endurance, must have spent at least 1 day in the ruins of Karran-Kural.

Benefit: Treat all cold damage you suffer as nonlethal damage.

RIME

Necromancy [Cold]
Level: Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You infuse the target's body with the unwholesome chill of the grave. This chill dulls the creature's reactions and weakens its stamina. If the saving throw fails, the target suffers a –4 penalty to Dexterity and a –4 penalty on Fortitude saves.

Material Component: A pinch of dirt from a grave dug during a winter month.

CAMPAIGN SEED: SECRETS OF THE SOUL PILLARS

The soul pillars hold great stores of knowledge, and you can use them to impart a great deal of information to the players. Each use of the soul pillars requires a minute of concentration and an Intelligence check.

Long-term use of soul pillars exposes a character to dangerous necromantic energy, as befits the disturbing practice of learning from tortured undead souls. Feel free to create strange and detrimental side effects for characters who work too long with the soul pillars; a gradual shift in alignment to evil might be one possible result.

The soul pillars dispense their foul knowledge in small and erratic spurts. A successful activation allows the user to pull knowledge from the undead spirits trapped in the soul pillar. This works like the *contact outer plane* spell contacting a greater deity (caster level 20). Each use of a soul pillar requires a DC 16 Intelligence check to avoid having the user's Intelligence and Charisma reduced. This check follows the rules and restrictions of *contact outer plane*. Fetor's notes on the soul pillars provide a +6 competence bonus on this check.

Unlike *contact outer plane*, a soul pillar is not limited to one-word answers. You should feel free to dispense cryptic phrases or even longer clues in addition to the one-word answers given to most questions. As an example, if a character asks a soul pillar about *soulcages*, the response might be:

"When cages of metal hold souls of pain the prison will open."

ICEFANE CORPSE

Necromancy [Cold]
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area: One undead creature
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)
You infuse the affected undead with a powerful burst of necromantic cold. Affected undead gain the following benefits:

- One of the undead creature's natural attacks becomes infused with supernatural cold, and inflicts 1d6 additional points of cold damage on a hit.
- Fire resistance 10.
- Any time the undead suffers cold damage, it is instead healed for an amount of hit points equal to the damage it would have suffered. Any resistance to cold that the undead creature might have does not reduce the amount of healing that it receives when exposed to cold damage.

Material Component: A wight's thumbnail.

NECROTIC MIST

Necromancy [Cold]
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: Fog spreads in 20-ft. radius, 20 ft. high
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude partial
Spell Resistance: Yes
A chill black mist seeps from the ground. The mist carries with it an unwholesome chill. It slows and freezes living creatures caught in its grasp, while at the same time healing undead.

Living creatures in the cloud suffer 2d6 points of cold damage per round on your turn (no save). Upon entering the cloud or at the beginning of each round spent within the cloud, a living creature must make a Fortitude saving throw or become *slowed*.

Undead within the cloud heal 5 hit points of damage per round.

The mist obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. A creature within 5 feet has concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target).

Material Component: A small piece of a tombstone dedicated to a creature that became undead after being buried for at least 1 month. Ω

Jesse Decker took a pass on a career in biochemistry for the jet-set, limousine lifestyle of the gaming industry. He now works as a game designer at Wizards of the Coast. In the past he worked as an editor on Dragon Magazine, and his writing credits include Hammer & Helm from Green Ronin as well as the upcoming Unearthed Arcana and other titles from Wizards of the Coast.

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5. Celeste
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7. Ike Iverson
8. Fellian Shard
9. Fario Ellegoth
10. Shensen Tesseril
11. Crazy Jared
12. Orbius Vhalantru
13. Severen Navalant
14. Skylar Krewis
15. Terseon Skellerang
16. Nidrama
17. Cora Lathenmire
18. Zachary Aslaxin II
19. Todd Vanderboren
20. Annah Taskerhill

Dungeon's
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1. Gorge
2. Stonework Bridge
3. Guarded Entrance
4. Guard Barracks
5. Sentinel Hall
6. North Gallery
7. Collapsed Passage
8. Great Hall
9. Sepulchre
10. Kitchens
11. Dwelling Halls
12. Storage Hall
13. Ore Storage
14. Forge Area
15. Workshop
16. Mine Entrance
17. Regent's Residence
18. Secret Escape Tunnels
19. Temple
20. Clerical Antechamber
21. Old Earth Shrine
22. Emerald Cave
23. Storage Cave
24. Guard Cave
25. Dwelling Cave
26. Altar Cave
27. Log Bridge
28. Underground River
29. Entrance to Lower Caverns
30. Excavated Tunnel
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1 square = 5 feet
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DANCE OF DEATH
SEE THE MAGNIFICENT
TILDE
RESORT

THE DEVIL BOX

BY RICHARD PETT

ARTWORK BY PETER BERGTING · CARTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG ZIPSE

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."
—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 2, scene 2

"The Devil Box" is a D&D adventure suitable for four 2nd-level PCs, although it can be modified for parties of 1st or 4th–5th levels as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. Characters completing the adventure are likely to advance to 3rd level. Much of the action takes place in a small town during a festival; this town can easily be dropped into an existing campaign. Since "The Devil Box" expects the PCs to deal with kobolds as temporary allies, it throws in some ethical dilemmas for good-aligned characters. Paladins and good-aligned clerics may have difficulties with such an alliance, but the kobolds are definitely the lesser of the two evils involved in this adventure. If the party spurns the assistance of potential kobold allies, you may wish to modify the adventure to make it a bit easier on the player characters, as encounters have been written with the assumption that the heroes have a little help.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago, a powerful chain devil named Zorith stalked the kobold lands of Clan Gnurka. The brave kobolds did their best to kill him, using some of the dirtiest fighting tricks imaginable, but Zorith and his servants were just too tough for them. All seemed lost.

The clan chief called upon his smartest and wisest kobolds, and threatened to eat those who didn't solve the problem. The threat worked, and one of the kobolds, a gifted and powerful sorcerer named Vert, came up with a solution; she would build a magic box to shrink the devil and capture him inside. She presented her plan to the clan chief, and in his desperation he allowed her full access to the clan's treasury to finance the undertaking. After toiling for many days and nights, the project came to fruition.

Vert called her creation the *devil box*. When the time came, Vert (along with a large number of terrified kobold bodyguards) confronted Zorith. It took several tries (and several bodyguards) before Zorith succumbed to the *devil box*, but in the end the chain devil was successfully imprisoned within, along with three of his imp minions. The box was closed, never to be opened again.

At least, that was the plan.

The current custodian of the *devil box*, a descendant of Vert's named Thistlelip, is both wise and smart. Unfortunately, these traits were not inherited by her younger sister, Narl. Not being as old, wise, or scaly as her older sister, Narl was naturally jealous.

Recently, on a visit to Thistlelip's cave, Narl noticed a strange box hidden in the pantry behind Thistlelip's oldest and most dangerous chutneys. When she quizzed her sister about it she was warned never to touch the box, to forget she had ever seen it, and stay the Hells out of the closet anyway.

Narl didn't take well to being snapped at, and went back to her own small shack (she being too low-rank in the clan to live in a proper cave) and built up her courage. The next day, she snuck into Thistlelip's cave and stole the box. When she got home, hardly daring to breathe, she opened it.

At first she thought it was empty, but then she saw the tiny shrunken devil inside. She thought it was just a strange-looking doll covered in chains. Unfortunately, it was the last thing she ever saw as the three invisible imps, considerably fed up after centuries of being cramped inside the box, killed her most horribly.

The imps and Zorith had remained lamentably conscious during the decades of their imprisonment; being outsiders, they had no need to eat or drink. And although they couldn't escape on their own, or even see the world outside the *devil box*, they could certainly hear through it. As a result, they knew that they had to make it at least seven days without getting re-captured before the reduction effects would wear off and Zorith would return to proper size. The devils set the shack on fire and fled to the nearby town of Muffin's Honor.

The flames of the burning shack brought kobolds from miles around to caper and giggle at the fire. Only when it died down did they notice the opened and empty *devil box* sitting unsinged in the ashes. Thistlelip was quickly informed, and so enraged was she at the news that her sister had opened the *devil box* that she died on the spot from anger. The kobolds knew that Zorith was very likely to return to extract vengeance against them once he regained his size. Worse...the only kobolds who could use the *devil box* to protect the clan were now dead.

The chief realized that there remained one heir to Vert's line. Unfortunately, this kobold was Thistlelip's addle-

minded and freakishly oversized son Lumbie, who had been sold years ago to a foul-humored human named Horatio Quigley to star in a freak show.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs come upon the burning remains of a merchant's caravan near the town of Muffin's Honor. The caravan is in the process of being looted by a pair of poorly disguised kobolds—Raspit and Chupo, who were sent to rescue Lumbie from the freak show and recapture the chain devil. One of the merchants survived the attack and can verify the kobolds' claim that they didn't attack it, and that the ambush was in fact carried out by three winged devils who took orders from a tiny talking doll wrapped in a hundred silver necklaces.

Hearing this, the kobolds grow quite excited. They explain what's going on with the imps and ask for assistance in rescuing Lumbie. They even have a letter, written by their chieftain, begging the heroes to help in thwarting the devil.

From here, the PCs travel to Muffin's Honor. There, they must plan Lumbie's liberation from the freak show while their kobold allies draw more attention to their plans than they're worth. Eventually, the imps realize what's going on and take pains to put a stop to the PCs' plans before they can recapture Zorith after tracking them to a small lair under a workhouse, where the imps have forged a tenuous alliance with several wererats.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

While you can start "The Devil Box" by merely having the PCs stumble across the caravan, it's best to have them pursuing a specific goal in the Muffin's Honor region. Some possible reasons for them to travel to the area follow.

- The characters may have heard of the Shackling, a festival taking place in the town of Muffin's Honor. Perhaps they travel there to take part in the festival, or perhaps they wish to meet someone who's visiting town during the festival.
- Curiosity might draw some characters to Muffin's Honor so they can visit the infamous freak show located there. They may be following up on rumors that the owner of the freak show sells rare and exotic monster parts for spell components. Nothing is further from the truth, of course.

THE BURNING MERCHANT (EL 4)

As the characters approach this opening encounter, there's a chance they'll notice trouble early. A successful Spot check (DC 20) allows them to notice wisps of smoke rising on the other side of a low hill and to catch a whiff of burning wood. A successful Listen check (DC 16) allows characters to hear the tittering of the two kobolds as they loot the ruined wagon.

> Up ahead, a large merchant's wagon lies on its side in the middle of the road. Smashed barrels that once contained wine lie in heaps about the ruined wagon. The rear of the wagon is partially burnt, and parts of it still smolder.
>
> At the head of the wagon lie the bodies of a man and a horse. Blood pools around the bodies, and the skin of both is a terrible fiery red. The bodies are horribly swollen, and almost seem to steam from several deep punctures on the necks and chests. The man's legs are buried under an upturned chest that has opened and spilled hundreds of silver coins across the ground.

This wagon belonged to a traveling merchant named Erasmus, and it is his body splayed on the ground near his faithful horse, Emily. His wagon was attacked less than an hour ago by Zorith and the three imps; for the devils, it was a spur of the moment decision born of a burning need to spread some mayhem and despair. They broke off the attacks when they found the big chest of silver coins and were inadvertently burned by some of them.

The imps lit the wagon on fire before they left, but they didn't do a very good job. It's still burning, but only very slowly. The fire can easily be extinguished, and burns out in another ten minutes. The wagon's contents consisted of over a dozen barrels of wine; most of these barrels have smashed open, their contents emptied onto the road.

Both Erasmus and the horse were poisoned to the point of immobility by the imps before the devils started to loot the caravan. A successful Heal check (DC 20) identifies the fact that both bodies were poisoned, but that death actually occurred from dozens of small puncture wounds to each.

Creatures: A few minutes before the PCs arrive, the kobold heroes Raspit and Duke Chupo stumbled onto the road after spending a day and a night lost in the nearby woods. The kobold commandos that were sent with them to provide support are all dead now, after a particularly tragic encounter with a pack of dire weasels down by the river. The two kobolds have completely forgotten their mission to rescue Lumbie while they skitter about looting the ruined wagon. They're making quite a bit of excited noise and are quite distracted with what wine remains available, so they suffer a –4 penalty on any Listen and Spot checks to notice the approaching PCs. Both kobolds are disguised (somewhat poorly) as halflings.

The immediate surroundings contain one more surprise. A successful Search check (DC 12) uncovers the unconscious body of a dwarf slumped in the undergrowth near the edge of the road. This is Stonty Dourchops (male dwarf Exp2), a friend and (now sadly former) employee of the dead merchant. The imps have hurt and poisoned Stonty something terrible, but if he's revived and comforted he can give his account of the attack.

Stonty is an unusual dwarf; he never really had as much of an interest in the ground as he did for things that grew in the ground. Particularly surface plants that bore fruit. Particularly grapes. Because grapes can be made into wine. Stonty really likes wine. He also likes making money by selling wine and educating others on the finer points of wine. Preferably over a glass of wine. Or an entire wineskin, for that matter.

Raspit, Son of the Clan Chief, Male Kobold Rog2: CR 2; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d6; hp 6; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp –5; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (1d4–2/18–20 Small masterwork rapier) or + 3 ranged (Small shortbow 1d4/×3); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, light sensitivity, trapfinding; AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 6, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +9, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Diplomacy +9, Escape Artist +7, Forgery +7, Gather Information +9, Hide +11, Intimidate +11, Jump +0, Knowledge (local) +7, Search +4, Spot +6, Tumble +7, Use Rope +2 (+4 bindings).

Feats: Persuasive.

Languages: Common, Draconic, Undercommon.

Possessions: *+1 Small light metal shield*, Small masterwork rapier named "Zathsop the poker, bane of gnomes and badgers," Small short bow, 20 arrows, exquisite clothes worth 60 gp, 300 gold pieces in a leather bag, disguise kit, scale-cleaning kit, 4 bars of soap, horn polish, tail cleaning brush, tooth-and-toe picks.

Raspit is a suave and quick-witted kobold who has been served well by his skill at talking circles around would-be enemies. Back home, he has numerous admirers. Unfortunately, this and his relationship to the chief (his father) have resulted in a somewhat imperious attitude that won't go over well in non-kobold societies. Raspit is 3 ft. 4 in. tall, has red stripes on his neck, back, and arms, and dresses immaculately. Dirt and filth are his greatest enemies, and despite the fact that he lives in a cave he always seems clean.

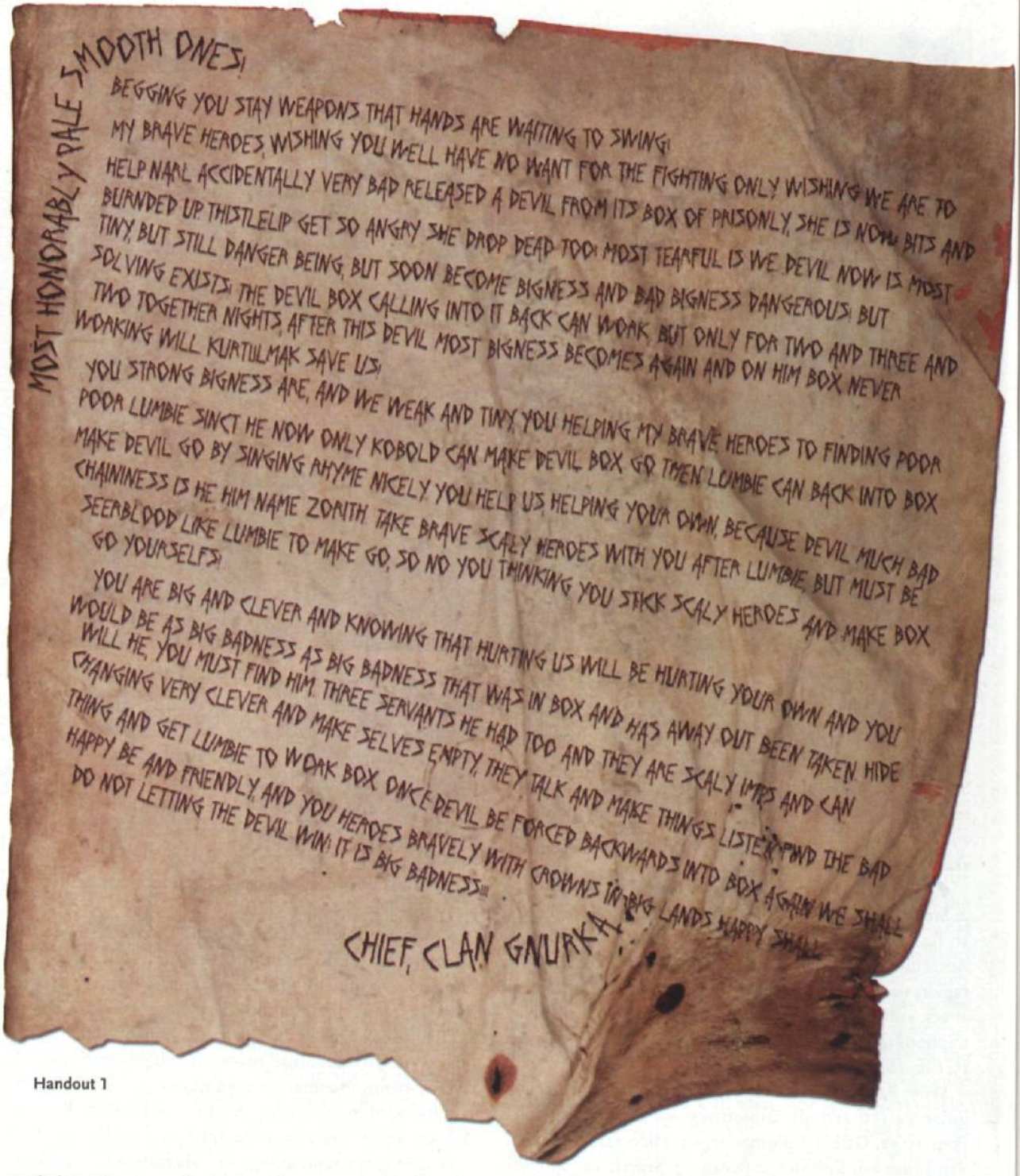
His Terribleness Duke Chupo, Slayer of Rosie the Seamstress, Male Kobold Rgr1/Ftr1: CR 2; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d10+2; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2, Grp –2; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/19–20, Small katana) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, Small masterwork light crossbow); SA favored enemy (gnome) +2; SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, wild empathy +2; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Craft (trapmaking) +1, Disguise +1, Hide +10, Knowledge (nature) +2, Move Silently +5, Search +1, Survival +4, Swim +6.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (katana), Quick-draw, Track[B].

Languages: Common, Draconic.

Possessions: *+1 leather armor*, Small heavy steel shield, Small katana (masterwork bastard sword, named "Dathslur the Mighty" and inscribed on the blade with numerous draconic drinking songs), masterwork light crossbow,


MOST HONORABLY PALE SMOOTH ONES!
BEGGING YOU STAY WEAPONS THAT HANDS ARE WAITING TO SWING!
MY BRAVE HEROES, WISHING YOU WELL HAVE NO WANT FOR THE FIGHTING ONLY WISHING WE ARE TO
HELP NARL ACCIDENTALLY VERY BAD RELEASED A DEVIL FROM ITS BOX OF PRISONLY. SHE IS NOW BITS AND
BURNDED UP THISTLELIP GET SO ANGRY SHE DROP DEAD TOO! MOST TEARFUL IS WE DEVIL NOW IS MOST
TINY, BUT STILL DANGER BEING, BUT SOON BECOME BIGNESS AND BAD BIGNESS DANGEROUS! BUT
SOLVING EXISTS! THE DEVIL BOX CALLING INTO IT BACK CAN WORK, BUT ONLY FOR TWO AND THREE AND
TWO TOGETHER NIGHTS, AFTER THIS DEVIL MOST BIGNESS BECOMES AGAIN AND ON HIM BOX NEVER
WORKING WILL KURTULMAK SAVE US!
YOU STRONG BIGNESS ARE, AND WE WEAK AND TINY. YOU HELPING MY BRAVE HEROES TO FINDING POOR
POOR LUMBIE SINCT HE NOW ONLY KOBOLD CAN MAKE DEVIL BOX GO THEN LUMBIE CAN BACK INTO BOX
MAKE DEVIL GO BY SINGING RHYME NICELY. YOU HELP US, HELPING YOUR OWN, BECAUSE DEVIL MUCH BAD
CHAINNESS IS HE. HIM NAME ZORTH. TAKE BRAVE SCALY HEROES WITH YOU AFTER LUMBIE, BUT MUST BE
SEEABLOOD LIKE LUMBIE TO MAKE GO, SO NO YOU THINKING YOU STICK SCALY HEROES AND MAKE BOX
GO YOURSELFS!
YOU ARE BIG AND CLEVER AND KNOWING THAT HURTING US WILL BE HURTING YOUR OWN AND YOU
WOULD BE AS BIG BADNESS AS BIG BADNESS THAT WAS IN BOX AND HAS AWAY OUT BEEN TAKEN. HIDE
WILL HE, YOU MUST FIND HIM. THREE SERVANTS HE HAD TOO AND THEY ARE SCALY IMPS AND CAN
CHANGING VERY CLEVER AND MAKE SELVES EMPTY. THEY TALK AND MAKE THINGS LISTEN. FIND THE BAD
THING AND GET LUMBIE TO WORK BOX. ONCE DEVIL BE FORCED BACKWARDS INTO BOX AGAIN WE SHALL
HAPPY BE AND FRIENDLY, AND YOU HEROES BRAVELY WITH CROWNS IN BIG LANDS HAPPY SHALL
DO NOT LETTING THE DEVIL WIN! IT IS BIG BADNESS!!!
CHIEF, CLAN GNURK!

Handout 1

20 bolts, 2 large amethysts (worth 100 gp each), disguise kit, 100 gp.

Although not nobility himself, Chupo adopted the title of "Duke" as a way to inflate his self-esteem and perceived power. Certainly none of the other kobolds are brave enough to challenge his claims, and the chief finds the whole thing too amusing and Chupo too valuable of an ally to object. Chupo is something of a hothead and prone to violence, especially when he gets confused or perceives an insult against him. Quite large and muscular for a kobold, Chupo stands a full 3 ft. 9 in. tall. He found his signature weapon, a katana, on a dead body that washed up on the shore of a nearby ocean many years ago. It took him months, the pinky finger on his left hand, and most of his left ear to figure out how to properly fight with the sword. He still hasn't quite mastered it.

Treasure: The two kobolds have so far only looted a small portion of the coins. There are 2,341 sp in all

spread out on the ground, but if Stonty is revived he demands they be returned to Erasmus's family in Muffin's Honor.

Development: Raspit and Chupo are probably too interested in looting the wagon to notice the approach of any PCs, but when they do notice they yelp in surprise. Chupo immediately quickdraws his katana and adopts a defensive pose but Raspit is quick to step between him and the PCs to (as diplomatically as possible) ask them to stay their weapons and hear the kobolds out.

If the PCs attack, Raspit fights defensively while Chupo throws all caution to the wind and focuses his attacks on the strongest-looking fighter. Raspit flees if he's wounded, but Chupo fights until slain or knocked out.

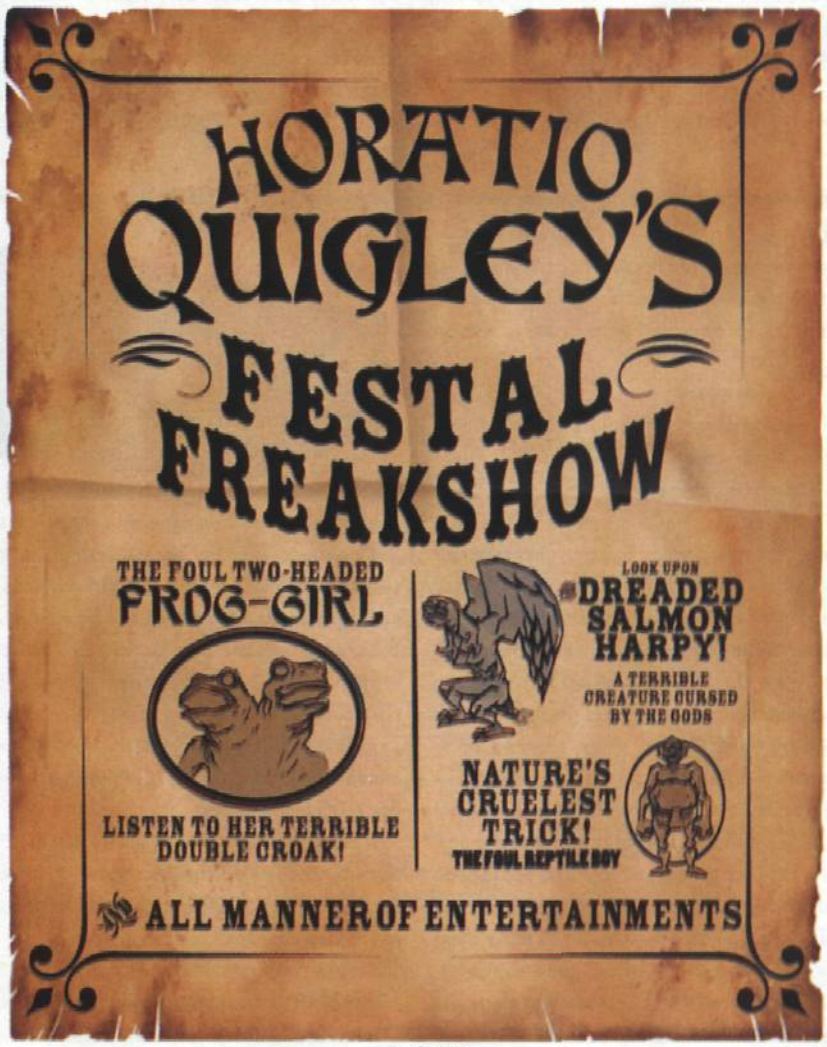
If, on the other hand, the PCs don't immediately attack, Raspit slowly reaches into his armor and withdraws a scrap of parchment. He holds it out toward the PCs and says that the parchment explains everything. This handout is reproduced nearby as Handout 1.

Raspit apologizes diplomatically for the poor quality of the letter; he volunteered to write it for the Chief but the Chief would have none of it and insisted on writing the letter himself. Raspit can answer any questions the PCs have about the situation to the best of his knowledge, including the key fact that the *devil box* can only be operated by a kobold of the appropriate lineage. Unfortunately, the only one of these left now that Thistlelip and Narl are dead is Lumbie, and Lumbie was sold to a freak show many years ago. At this point, Raspit pulls a much larger folded page from inside his armor; this is reproduced as Handout 2.

This page is a folded, stained, travel-worn poster for the freak show to which Lumbie was sold. The poster is crudely made, and advertises "Horatio Quigley's Festal Freakshow," which is based in nearby Muffin's Honor. The poster bears three crude drawings. One depicts the "foul two headed frog-girl—listen to her terrible double croak." Another caption dares you to "look upon the dreaded salmon harpy!" The final image is a picture of a scaled humanoid wearing a diaper with the words "nature's cruelest trick: the foul reptile boy!" written beneath. Raspit proudly points to the picture of the reptile boy and chirps proudly, "See? That's Lumbie right there!"

If the PCs find and revive Stonty, he grows quite nervous and wild-eyed and wants to do little more than flee back to his home in Muffin's Honor. If the PCs can calm him down by adjusting his initial attitude of indifferent to at least friendly, he settles down enough to talk. If the two kobolds are nearby (and Stonty sees through their halfling disguises), Diplomacy checks suffer a –4 penalty, but Intimidate checks gain a +4 circumstance bonus.

Stonty can describe the attack on the wagon by the three imps and the tiny chain devil. The devils appeared out of nowhere and promptly began stinging them. Emily the horse panicked and tripped, toppling the wagon on its side. The chain devil, which Stonty describes as a tiny man wrapped in dozens of silver necklaces, spent most of the time ordering the winged devils in some strange language. The imps promptly broke into the cashbox, but then squealed in pain or anger as the silver coins spilled out all over them. The imps got so angry that they lit the wagon on fire and stung Stonty, Eras-


HORATIO QUIGLEY'S
FESTAL FREAKSHOW
THE FOUL TWO-HEADED FROG-GIRL
LISTEN TO HER TERRIBLE DOUBLE CROAK!
LOOK UPON THE DREADED SALMON HARPY!
A TERRIBLE CREATURE CURSED BY THE GODS
NATURE'S CRUELEST TRICK!
THE FOUL REPTILE BOY
ALL MANNER OF ENTERTAINMENTS

Handout 2

mus, and the horse multiple times before they flew off toward Muffin's Honor, carrying their tiny boss as they went. Stonty managed to crawl to the undergrowth at the edge of the road before he passed out from the pain.

Stonty gladly accepts help if it is offered, but insists that all the goods and Erasmus's body are taken back to town to be returned to Erasmus's family. If he realizes the kobolds are actually kobolds, he remains suspicious of the PCs if they appear to be friends, and prefers to return to town on his own and arrange for someone to come back to gather the body later in the day.

If the two kobolds learn that the devils are behind the attack on the wagon, they both grow visibly nervous and immediately lose interest in looting it. They grow even more vocal in their attempts to gain the support and assistance of the PCs, and promise them whatever they think they want as rewards for their service. Whether or not their chief can (or wants to) honor these promises remains unclear. Raspit is quick to point out that if they don't catch the devils in three days, he'll return to full size and not only becomes too powerful to deal with, but can't be recaptured at this point.

Assuming the PCs agree to help, Chupo asks them to wait for a few minutes while he runs into the woods to retrieve the *devil box* from were they hid it before they approached the wrecked caravan. He carries the item on his back and refuses to let anyone else (including Raspit) touch it.

SHACKLED IN MUFFIN'S HONOR

Muffin's Honor (Small Town): Conventional; AL NG; Population 1,800; 800 gp limit; Assets 72,000 gp; Mixed (human 65%, gnome 20%, others 15%).

Authority Figures: Ragwort Quitewide, male gnome Ari6/Ftr3 (The Honorable Worship his Grace the Mayor of Muffin's Honor); Tippling Retniret, male gnome Ftr8 (Guard Overseer of the Town Watch).

Important Characters: Hawthorn Toowide, male human Exp5 (Landlord of the Grumpy Hogfish).

Others: Town Guards, War1 (100).

Muffin's Honor is a small town located on the banks of a slow-moving but deep river named the Turtlerun. Located along a fairly heavily patrolled stretch of the river, Muffin's Honor never saw the need for building a wall. As a result, the town sprawls over a fairly large region for its population.

Muffin's Honor is a town in the throes of festival. Once a year, for an entire week, the town of Muffin's Honor sets everything aside for "the Shackling." During this festival, unwed individuals of marriageable age wear colorful animal masks to show that they wish to wed. People adopt fanciful names (usually based on the nature of their mask) for the duration of the festival. Numerous events like dances, games, feasts, plays, concerts, and other performances are scheduled during the week, and the celebrants use these events to go

NEW MAGIC ITEM

The Devil Box: This coffin-shaped box measures nearly three feet in length. Expertly crafted of rare wood, the lid is gilt with lead and fastens with a black iron clasp. Engraved on the side is a short Draconic rhyme:

"Devil box, devil box,
Trusting strong locks;
Take him in, long to keep,
Tiny, small, asleep."

Activating the *devil box* is a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The box found in this adventure can be activated only by a kobold descendant of the original creator of the box, but if new *devil boxes* are created this restriction need not be duplicated. A successful Use Magic Device check (DC 30) allows a character to emulate this quality. Activation of the box requires the user to make a successful Perform (song) check (DC 12). When activated, up to 20 Hit Dice of devils within a 20 ft.-radius spread are pulled telekinetically into the box. If the devil has 8 or more Hit Dice, a successful Will save (DC 18) allows it to resist being drawn into the box. Devils with fewer than 8 Hit Dice get no saving throw, but they do gain spell resistance to avoid the effect. The box reduces the size of Small-sized or larger devils to Tiny size if necessary to make them all fit; the box can contain up to one Medium devil, two Small devils, or four Tiny devils. A reduced devil's statistics change along the guidelines indicated on page 291 of the *Monster Manual*.

One round after the box is used, the lid closes and magically seals. Devils inside the box remain conscious, but cannot take any actions. If the box is opened at a later time, any devils inside the box are immediately freed, but any devils that were reduced in size remain reduced for seven days, at which point they return to normal size.

A devil that is imprisoned in a *devil box* and later escapes and remains free for seven days is thereafter immune to the effects of that particular *devil box*.

A newly created *devil box* has 9 charges. The one found in this adventure has only 5 charges remaining; it took four tries last time to catch Zorith since he has enough Hit Dice to gain a saving throw against the *devil box*.

Strong conjuration; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *binding, planar binding*; Market Value 20,000 gp; Weight 15 lbs. (empty).

Muffins Honor
1. Erasmus's House
2. The Grumpy Hogfish
3. Horatio Quigley's Festal Freakshow
4. Mr. Muddletude's Workshop
THE TURTLERUN RIVER
N

out and meet prospective spouses. The masks make it difficult to judge someone solely on their appearance, so in theory, unions formed during the Shackling are stronger for being based on something more than appearance.

This unique celebration came to be not long after the town was founded several decades ago by a gnome named Tesker Quitewide. His daughter, Muffin (and the namesake for the town itself), was homely at best, so Tesker created the Shackling to give her a chance against the competition. Since then, the festival has grown incredibly popular, and now when it occurs, singles come from dozens of other nearby villages to look for mates.

A few minutes after the PCs arrive in town, they are approached by a pair of human women who wear colorful animal masks (one of a green grasshopper and one of a blue hawk) and carry between them a large covered wicker basket. The two women introduce themselves as Katydid and Sparrowhawk, and ask if the PCs have come to town to be Shackled. A successful Knowledge (local) check (DC 15) indicates a character has heard of this festival, otherwise, Katydid and Sparrowhawk are only too happy to explain it to them. The basket they carry contains nearly two dozen masks, and they offer to sell them at 1 gp per mask to anyone who wants to take part in the festival.

Characters who wear masks and take part in the Shackling quickly find that they receive a lot more attention than those who don't participate. Wearing a mask grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff, Disguise, Diplomacy, and Gather Information checks in town, while those who don't wear masks gain a –2 penalty on these skill checks. Also, those who wear the masks enjoy a 10% discount on any goods or services purchased in town, while those without masks pay full price. Of course, wearing a mask invites all manner of propositions from other mask wearers!

If the characters are escorting Stonty back from the caravan attack site, he first guides them to a small, humble cottage near the center of town. This was where Erasmus lived; his wife Belinda (human female Com2) answers the door and breaks down in tears as Stonty delivers the sad news. Stonty decides to stay with her for a while to console her, but thanks the PCs for their help and gives them each 100 sp as a reward. He says he'll report the event to the guard, and recommends an inn named "The Grumpy Hogfish" as a place for the PCs to stay. Further, he tells them the owner of the inn, a man named Hawthorn Toowide, is a friend and owes him some favors. If the PCs mention Stonty's name, Hawthorn lets them stay at the inn free of charge for the duration of the Shackling.

If the PCs decide to report the attack to the guard themselves, they find it difficult to get ahold of anyone in authority, since most of the city's leaders are at private celebrations. Guards listen with distracted interest to news of the attack, but they are prone to blame the attack on local bandits or troublemaking kobolds from the west, and don't believe any stories about miniaturized devils.

RUMORS IN MUFFIN'S HONOR

If the characters ask around town, they're bound to uncover numerous bits of information. With a successful Gather Information check, they can learn any of the following rumors. Select a rumor of a DC equal to or lower than the result of the Gather Information check (preferably one related to the line of questioning). Not all rumors are true, and not all true rumors have any bearing on this adventure's plot; you can use these rumors as you see fit to generate further adventures in Muffin's Honor.

Gather Info Check Result	Rumor
10	So I hear there's some new freak on display out at Quigley's! Some sort of boneless person or something. I went last summer and it wasn't all it was cracked up to be. Well, I suppose that reptile boy was pretty scary. (True; the boneless person is a choker Quigley recently acquired.)
12	I haven't seen as many leprechauns or nixies down by the river lately. Maybe some sort of monster's moved in and has been eating them? (False; there were never any fey lurking in the Turtlerun River; this townsfolk is just a pathological liar.)
14	Been an awful lot of petty robberies lately down by the river. Mostly food and drink, but I hear someone had a delivery of nice big comfy chairs stolen as well! (True; the imps have been stealing all sorts of things to keep their boss happy.)
18	Something's been killing a lot of stray dogs in town lately. Something poisonous; the carcasses turn up covered with tiny punctures and are all bloated and nasty. (True; the imps have been attracting a lot of attention from local dogs as they wander around town in cat form; the inevitable result of these encounters is a dead dog.)
20	So one of the town guards went missing a few days ago, and the rest of them are covering it up and saying no one's missing. I wonder what they're up to, really? (False; one of the guards was recently fired for disorderly conduct and he then quietly left town.)
22	Most of the dead dogs that have been showing up in town were found near Muddletude's Workhouse. You don't suppose he's up to something, do ya? (True, Muddletude's Workhouse is where the devils are hiding out.)
26+	It's true! I saw a little red guy sitting on a gutter and eating something even more red. I rubbed my eyes and looked again and it was just a black alley cat. No one believes me, but I swear that little guy turned into that cat! One thing's for sure...I'm not gonna pick on any cats for a while! (True.)

KOBOLDS IN THE TOWN

If the PCs have joined forces with Raspit and Chupo, they may have trouble getting into town without causing a scene. The two kobolds currently use disguise kits to pose as halflings in hooded cloaks. Both take 10 on their Disguise checks, so Raspit has a result of 14 and Chupo a result of 11. Although these results are good enough to pass for halflings in a crowd of villagers (who take 10 on their Spot checks for a result of 10), they won't stand up long to close scrutiny. The PCs would be wise to help the kobolds out with their disguises, either with their own skills or with magic. If the kobolds wear masks for the Shackling, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks.

Assuming the kobolds stay with the PCs and don't do anything to draw undue attention, make a single Spot check at a +0 modifier each day to represent the townsfolk of Muffin's Honor. Of course, chances are that the kobolds aren't able to restrain themselves for long, especially if they're left to their own devices. Some possible trouble the two can get into includes the following:

- Although Raspit is able to keep his hatred of gnomes in check for at least three days, Chupo doesn't quite have the willpower to do so. Each day, Chupo must make a Wisdom check (DC 12) to avoid flying off the handle as a reaction to the innocent actions of a local gnome. If he freaks out, he begins insulting and mocking the gnome mercilessly (but without much style). This scene allows the villagers to make a second Spot check that day to see through his disguise.
- The sight of so many shops full of food and goods is a considerable distraction for the kobolds. In awe of the bounty, they quickly forget why they've come to Muffin's Honor and, if left to their own devices, spend most of the first day spending the money the chief gave them on food, drink, and souvenirs. If left alone, the kobolds each spend around 100 gp a day. The kobolds arrange to have their numerous purchases delivered to wherever they're staying; it's possible that the PCs could return to their quarters after a day of investigation to find long lines of delivery wagons forming about their inn as bolts of cloth, huge amounts of garish gold-painted furniture, barrels of tobacco, fine clothes, dozens of geese, and even a pair of dog-sleds (without dogs, of course) are delivered. In any case, this increased activity gives the townsfolk two additional Spot checks that day to see through the disguises.
- If the kobolds become aware of the fact that the imps are posing as cats, they become obsessed with the numerous stray cats that live in the town and spend far too much time chasing them down and closely examining them for signs of impness. This bizarre behavior grants

the townsfolk an additional Spot check each day to see through the kobolds' disguises.

- If the kobolds are wearing masks for the Shackling, one of them might be propositioned by a gnome or halfling who mistakes them for another gnome or halfling looking for a spouse. This grants the townsfolk an additional Spot check that day, and depending on how far it goes, may grant even more checks as you see fit.

If the kobolds are found out, of course, the situation rapidly gets out of hand. The crowd immediately turns hostile, and unless the kobolds or a PC ally can use Diplomacy or Intimidate to make them at least indifferent, the crowd quickly apprehends and imprisons the kobolds. The two are executed only a few days later.

All of the PCs and both kobolds can try to aid another the primary Diplomacy or Intimidate check. If they can make the crowd indifferent, they don't swarm the kobolds immediately but they do demand they leave town at once. If the crowd can be made friendly, they let the kobolds remain in town as long as they stay under supervision of the PCs at all times. If, somehow, the crowd can be made helpful, the kobolds are allowed to wander the city as they see fit, as long as they don't cause much trouble.

HORATIO QUIGLEY'S FESTAL FREAKSHOW (EL 3)

The PCs will doubtless visit or ask about Horatio Quigley's Festal Freakshow soon after arriving in Muffin's Honor. The Freakshow is currently in the off-season, during which time it can be located just outside town.

> Near the edge of town lies a large, colorful pavilion. Several yellow banners flying above the tent declare it to be "Horatio Quigley's Festal Freakshow." The tent has a pair of large yellow, blue, and green wagons drawn near it. One wagon seems to be a residence, while the smaller one is obviously a cage. A crudely constructed timber fence some three feet high surrounds the whole site.

The Freakshow's hours run from morning to dusk. Although Muffin's Honor is the Freakshow's home town, the large number of visitors for the Shackling insures a healthy trade; indeed, the Freakshow is a favorite place for couples to visit during the festival.

Entrance into the Freakshow is a mere 5 sp. Quigley has many exhibits, but the only living freaks in his show are the reptile boy and the incredible boneless man. The inside of the tent is divided into numerous chambers by hanging canvases; Quigley brings through groups of a dozen customers at a time and talks up each entry for about a minute before moving on to the next. There are ten displays in all:

Stuffed Krenshar: This stuffed krenshar is displayed with its skull showing.

The Monster Jars: Simply a shelf of various monsters in jars, including a fetal manticore, an unhatched hydra, a preserved stirge, a dried Small monstrous spider, and a mummified tiger's claw (this last object is billed as a rakshasa's claw).

Giant Feather: A single huge feather the size of a rowboat sits on a table here. Quigley claims it's the feather of a baby roc, but in truth, it's a fake.

The Salmon Harpy: Although this freak looks real and alive (a salmon-headed and tailed harpy), it's actually an illusion Quigley created years ago with a scroll of *permanent image* at caster level 11. Of course, he can't take the image with him when he takes the show on the road, so he bills the salmon harpy as a "home-town exclusive" to encourage local customers.

Adventurer's Heads: This exhibit displays seven busts of various adventurers. Closer examination reveals that all of the heads appear to have been broken off of statues. Quigley claims that these heads are those of powerful adventurers he's collected from various basilisk, cockatrice, and medusa's lairs. Whether or not this is true is up to you.

Dried Darkmantle: This creature is stretched out on a board and looks quite menacing to those who don't recognize it as nothing more than a darkmantle.

The Reptile Boy: One of only two living freaks in the show; this is Lumbie the freakishly large kobold. Quigley is anything but spare with his whip on Lumbie, who has been conditioned to act feral and scary after six years in the

show. He's learned that using words to talk brings pain, and when he sees a group of gawkers approach he's quick to put on a show of froth and growls.

Stuffed Owlbear: This stuffed owlbear has seen better days; it's barely held together by baling wire. At one point, the owlbear was rigged to move and make noises, but its moving parts have long since fallen apart.

The Two-Headed Frog-Girl: Another *permanent image*, the two-headed frog-girl is as disturbing to look at as one would expect, especially since she sits in an ornate and expensive-looking bathtub. Quigley can make the illusion croak out a strangely soothing duet by concentrating.

The Incredible Boneless Man: This is actually a choker that Quigley purchased only a week ago from a group of shady mercenaries that caught it in a nearby cave. Quigley hasn't had time yet to write up advertisements for this new exhibit, but has been doing his best to spread the word. The choker is kept in an uncomfortably small cage in the center of a larger, 15-foot-wide cage, so its arms can't reach observers. The creature rages and curses in Undercommon whenever it sees visitors, much to Quigley's delight. If the PCs can speak Undercommon and try to talk to the creature, it promises them great rewards for rescuing it. It's lying, of course; if it's set free it immediately attacks everything in sight. If Quigley notices a PC talking to the creature, he's quick to usher visitors (including the PC) out of the show, after which he bars that PC from the show.

Quigley's personal wagon is a cramped and cluttered single room. He allows no visitors inside the wagon, and keeps the door locked at all times. He keeps Lumbie in the nearby cage after hours, with a thick canvas draped over it and tied securely to the bottom of the wagon. The bars are of iron and the cage door is kept locked. Inside is a filthy layer of hay and a single bowl for food and water.

Wagon Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 25.

Iron Cage Wagon: 2 in. thick bars; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 27.

Creatures: Quigley lives in his wagon at the edge of the Freakshow, but all of his other employees have homes in town. During the day, he can be found leading groups through the Freakshow or gathering customers near the tent entrance.

He employs four assistants. Worm (male gnome Com1) is an exceedingly thin gnome with unnaturally pale skin and greasy hair; he almost qualifies as a freak himself, which is why Quigley hired him to collect entrance money from customers. The other three are Trent, Boris, and Morris, local bullies hired by Quigley to guard the grounds and make sure no one gets in without paying. These three work in 8-hour shifts so that one of them is always on guard. If they catch someone trying to sneak into the Freakshow, they yell loudly to attract Quigley's attention and then close in to

administer a beating. Despite their aggressive personalities, though, the three bullies are cowards at heart and flee into town if they take any lethal damage at all.

Horatio Quigley, Male Human Brd3: CR3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6+6; hp 14; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (+1 *whip*, 1d2+2 nonlethal); SA *fascinate*, spells; SQ bardic knowledge +4, bardic music, countersong, inspire courage +1; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 13.

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +7, Perform (act) +7, Perform (oratory) +7, Sleight of Hand +8.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Bluff).

Languages: Common, Draconic, Gnome, Goblin, Undercommon.

Spells Known (3/2; save DC 11 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation*; 1—*charm person, identify, ventriloquism*.

Possessions: +1 *whip*, scroll of *ray of enfeeblement* (CL 4), large silver chain with numerous rubies (made of paste and poor quality silver worth 15 gp), wooden megaphone, outrageously colorful performer's outfit worth 80 gp, key ring (contains keys for all locks in the Freakshow).

THE SALMON HARPY

HORATIO QUIGLEY, PROPRIETOR

Horatio Quigley is a large man, yet he is surprisingly quick on his feet. He has stringy black hair, florid skin, and a truly impressive handlebar moustache and goatee. Although he dresses extravagantly, his clothes and accessories aren't as valuable as they appear to the untrained eye. A naturally suspicious and cruel man, Quigley has excelled in his chosen profession due to his almost complete lack of ethics.

Lumbie the Reptile Boy, Freakishly Large and Dim-Witted Male Kobold War1: CR 1; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 1d8+1; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d3, unarmed strike); SA —; SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Wis −2; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 5, Wis 6, Cha 14.

Skills: Craft (trapmaking) −1, Handle Animal +6, Search −1.

Feats: Toughness.

Languages: Draconic.

Freakishly large for a kobold, Lumbie is a full 4 ft. 5 in. tall—just about the right size for his current role as "reptile boy." Lumbie's been a prisoner of Quigley's his entire life,

and having grown up outside of kobold society he lacks their typical petty cruelty and hatred. He does understand fear, however, and lives every day to please Quigley so he can avoid the all too common whippings.

Choker: hp 16, *Monster Manual* 34.

Tactics: If Quigley catches the PCs sneaking into his freak show, he'll immediately run into town to gather guards. He fights to defend himself if attacked, but has no interest in putting himself in danger. If he feels he has the upper hand, though, he has no problem using his whip to beat people into submission.

Treasure: Inside Quigley's wagon, a successful Search check (DC 20) uncovers a silk bedsheet under a large pile of coarse blankets. The bedsheet is worth 50 gp.

A locked chest under the bed contains 341 gp.

Locked Chest: Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 24; Open Lock DC 30.

Development: Although he's dishonest, shady, and all-around reprehensible, Quigley is still a fairly well-connected man. His freak show brings in a large amount of business to town, and he's always prompt on paying his taxes. If the PCs break into the Festal Freakshow and are caught, they'll have a hard time explaining themselves to the local authorities. Quigley pushes for life imprisonment, but if no one was killed the town guard fines the PCs 500 gp each (plus any damages) and kicks them out of town.

Of course, breaking into the Freakshow and busting Lumbie out isn't the only way to rescue the kobold. Quigley's initial attitude toward the PCs is indifferent. If he can be made friendly, he gives the PCs a free tour of the Freakshow. If he can be made helpful, and the PCs explain why they need Lumbie, he agrees to "loan" them the kobold for as long as it takes to get the job done.

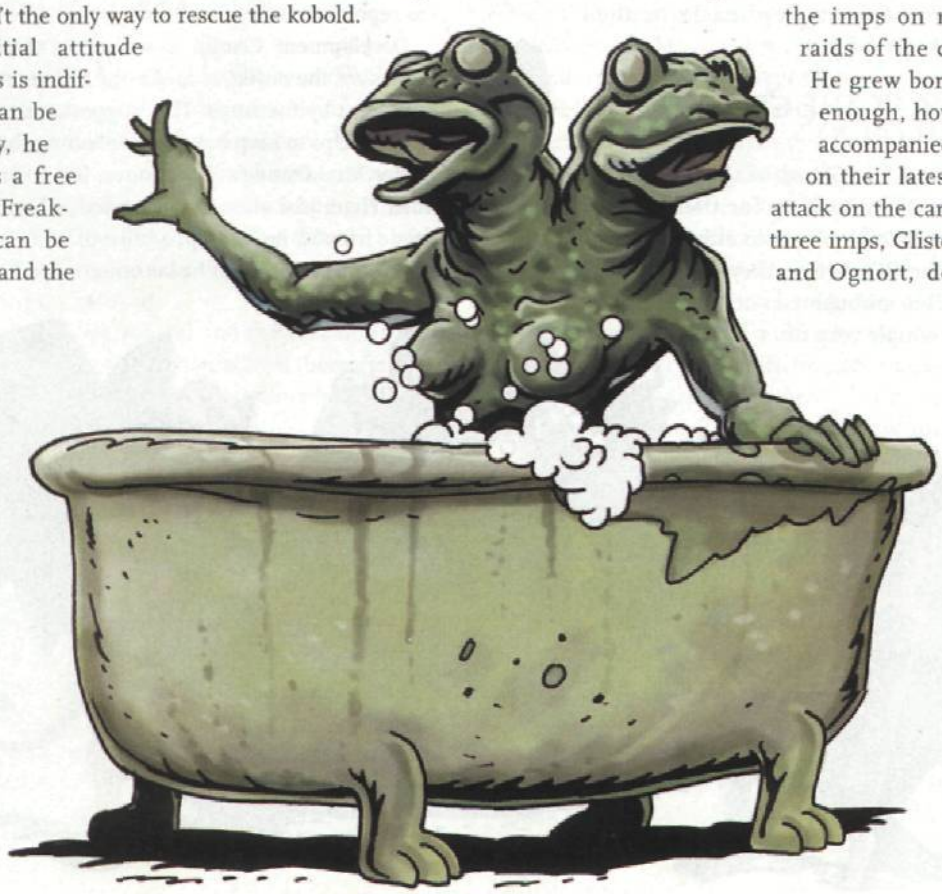
For the right price, Quigley is even willing to sell Lumbie to the PCs. If his attitude is indifferent, he'll sell the kobold for 1,000 gp. If his attitude is friendly, his minimum asking price drops to 600 gp; if his attitude is helpful, it drops to 200 gp.

If rescued, Lumbie clings to his rescuer and whimpers softly for some time. He's never seen another kobold, and reacts to the PCs' kobold allies with curiosity initially but quickly learns to distrust and fear them as well. Lumbie has a hard life ahead of him, and without friends it won't take long for him to fall back on instinct and become a menace to everyone around him. For now, though, he remains fairly harmless and grateful to his rescuers.

DEVILS IN THE ALLEYS

After escaping the *devil box*, Zorith and his three imp minions quickly made their way to Muffin's Honor, where the kyton once had a gnome ally named Max Muddletude. Zorith was delighted to find that Max still lived, and even better, had become both a prominent citizen and a wererat in the meantime. Max Muddletude agreed to hide the devils in a secret room below his workhouse until the kyton returned to full size.

Until then, the kyton spends his time in the secret room, eating fine foods and drink stolen by the imps on night-time raids of the city above. He grew bored quickly enough, however, and accompanied the imps on their latest raid (the attack on the caravan). The three imps, Glister, Matilda, and Ognort, do most of



THE TWO-HEADED FROG-GIRL

their traveling in the town in the form of three particularly fat black cats. During these times they seek out food and drink to steal for Zorith and keep a general watch on the city above to make sure none of the kobolds are coming for them with that accursed box.

Each day that passes, allow each of the imps to make a Gather Information check (DC 15) to see if they learn of the arrival in town of a strange halfling carrying a large coffin-shaped box on his back. Of course, if the PCs aren't allied with the kobolds, or managed to smuggle the *devil box* into the city unnoticed, the imps won't be able to learn of their arrival in this manner. If the kobolds have been discovered, the imps hear the news automatically as it spreads through town. If the PCs ask many questions about devil sightings, the imps hear about this if their Gather Information check has a result of 13 or higher.

Once the imps find out that it's likely the kobolds are after them, one of them casts a *commune* spell. From this spell they learn the following:

- If there are kobolds are in Muffin's Honor.
- If the *devil box* is in town.
- If the kobolds have allies.
- If the kobold's allies are the PCs.
- If the PCs intend to track them down and put them back in the box.
- If chickens feel pain (they had a spare question left over).

As soon as the imps find out that they're being hunted, they begin staging attacks on their hunters as detailed below.

AMBUSH AT THE GRUMPY HOGFISH (EL 5)

Once the imps and Zorith realize that the PCs are possibly looking for them, the devils organize an ambush to either scare off or kill the PCs before they become a problem. This ambush can occur at any location; a sample map of the area surrounding an inn named "The Grumpy Hogfish" is presented nearby as one possibility. The Tactics section below assumes the ambush takes place here (perhaps as the PCs return to their lodgings after scouting out the Freakshow).

Creatures: The ambush group consists of a wererat named Crump and six dire rat minions. Additionally, Ognort the imp lurks nearby invisibly to observe the attack and report back the results to the boss.

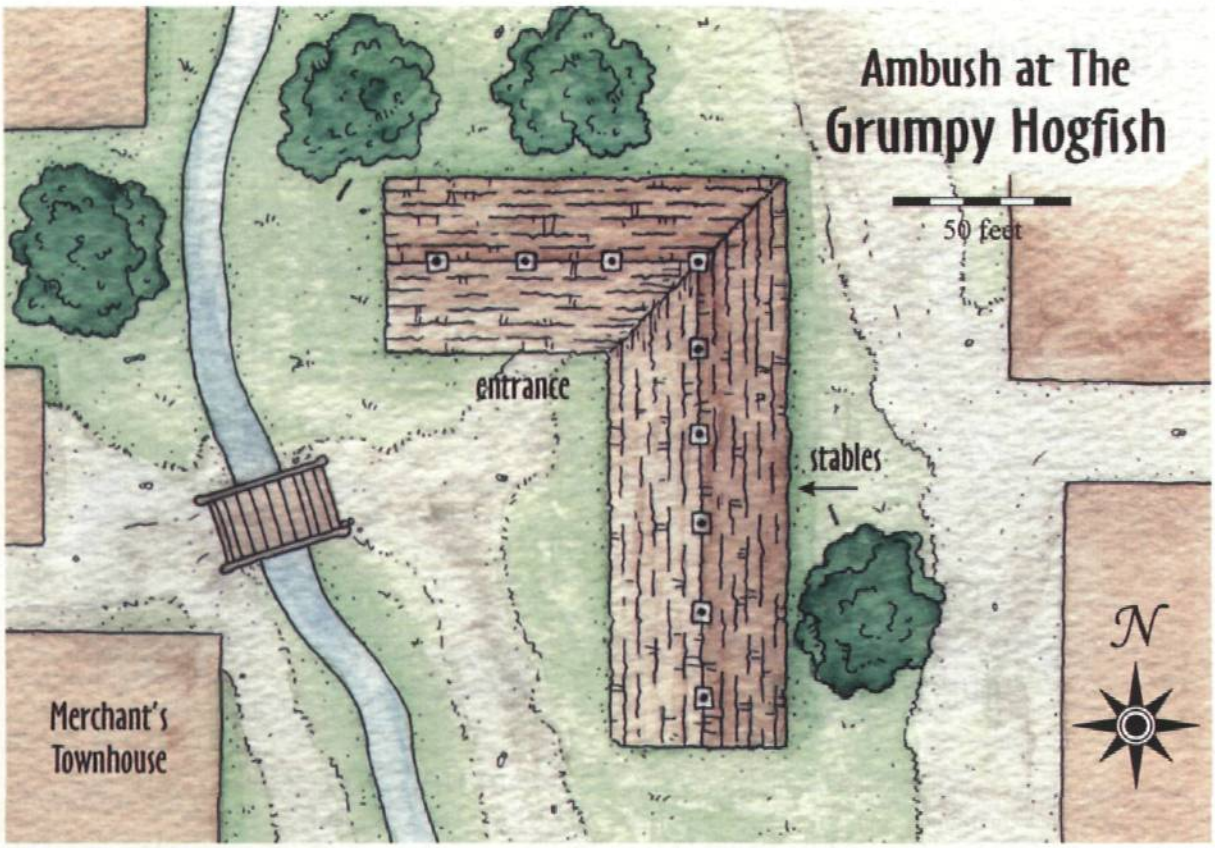
- **Crump, Male Human Wererat Warr**: hp 15; *Monster Manual* 173.
- **Dire Rats (6)**: hp 5 each; *Monster Manual* 64.
- **Ognort, Male Imp**: hp 13; *Monster Manual* 56.

Tactics: Crump and the six dire rats clamber onto the rooftop of the Grumpy Hogfish and hide near one of the chimneys. When Crump sees the PCs approaching the entrance, he sends the six dire rats down the roof to jump onto the PCs and attack while he starts shooting them with his light crossbow.

Crump has no intention of getting caught, and flees if PCs manage to defeat the rats or he drops to fewer than 6 hit points. He does so by transforming into a dire rat and fleeing to the southeast and into the alleys.

Ognort watches the ambush from the corner of a merchant's townhouse roof to the southwest of the inn. He does so invisibly and in cat form; if he's spotted, he flees to the southeast over the rooftops until he's out of sight, then assumes imp form and flies back to the workhouse to report.

Development: Crump, as with most of the other wererat "allies" of the devils, is under the influence of a *suggestion* spell cast by the imps. This *suggestion* to remain loyal to Zorith helps to keep him from revealing the devils' hideout under Muddletude's Workhouse, but it isn't insurmountable. His initial attitude if captured is hostile; if he can be made friendly he'll accept a bribe of no less than 100 gp to give up the location. If he becomes helpful, he gives up the



location of the hideout voluntarily in exchange for protection from the devils' wrath.

If Crump escapes, he doesn't have the presence of mind to try to throw off anyone who follows him. He makes four Hide checks on the way back to the workhouse. As long as a PC can match his speed in rat form and manages to Spot him on all four Hide checks, he can be followed right to the front door of the Workhouse. Alternately, a character with Track can follow his trail back to the hideout with a successful Survival check (DC 16).

If the ambush is unsuccessful and the PCs don't find their way to Muddletude's Workhouse soon thereafter, the devils arrange further ambushes in an attempt to finish the job.

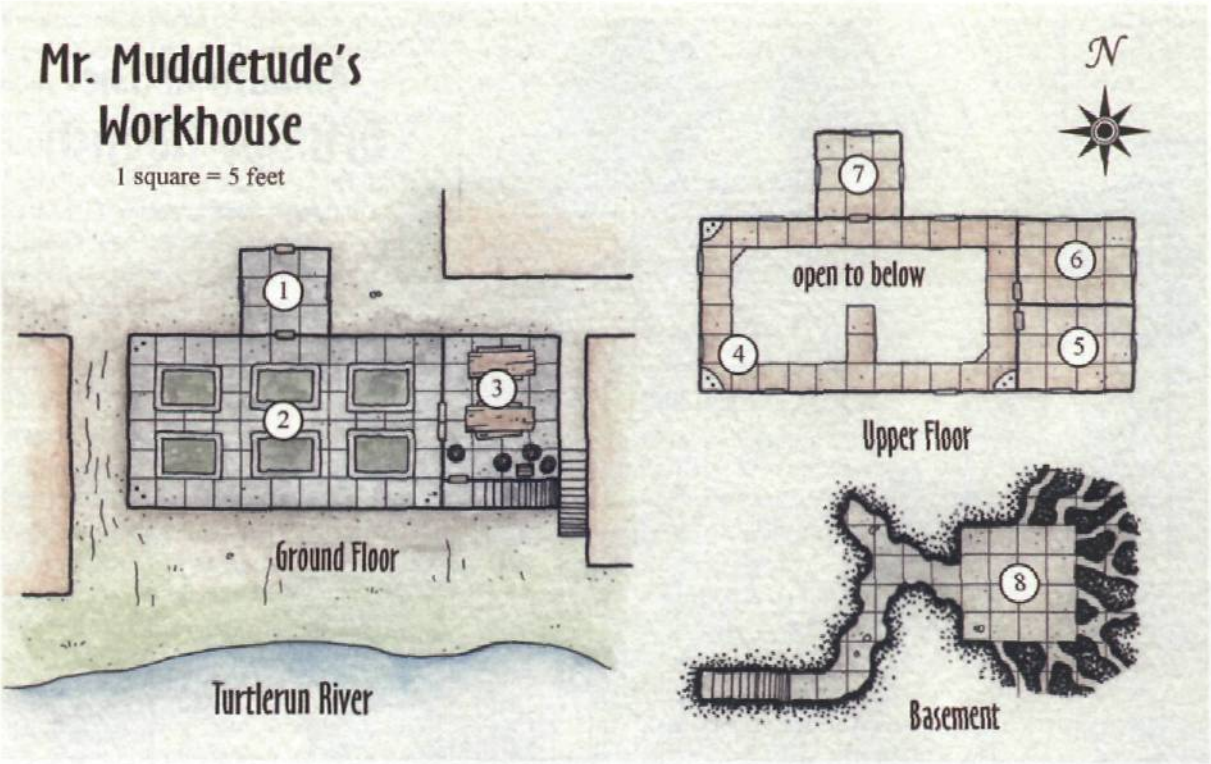
MR. MUDDLETUDE'S WORKHOUSE

This is a somber, two-story building made of wood with slate shingles on the roof. The building is painted gray, and stained from countless rainy winters. Only a few high windows open into the upper floor, and they are tightly shuttered. A sign above the front door proclaims this to be "Muddletude's Workhouse."

This building is owned by an ancient gnome named Max Muddletude. Max has lived in the area for nearly 150 years, and has successfully kept secret his worship of the archdevil Mammon for that entire time. He was allied with Zorith before the chain devil was captured many years ago, and was only too happy to welcome him and his imps back into his circle a few days ago. Since Zorith's capture, Muddletude built a large workhouse on the north bank of the Turtlerun River. He employs the destitute, the homeless, and the orphaned here as cleaners. In return for two hot meals a day and a place to rest, these wretches toil through 14-hour daily shifts and dream of escape. The conditions within are quite horrid for the workers, but being homeless and friendless, they are unfortunately beneath the notice of the town's citizens. As long as Muddletude provides quick, affordable cleaning services, his horrid little empire prospers.

Muddletude himself has become a wererat since Zorith's capture, and now employs other wererats as thugs and enforcers. Max had no intention of betraying the devils, but nevertheless the imps have made sure to secure his loyalty with several *suggestion* spells.

The entire interior of this run-down building is poorly lit and reeks of bleach. Most rooms are lit with tallow candles and (during the day) thin shafts of daylight that squeeze through the windows, the shutters of which have long since rusted shut.



No guards are posted outside the building unless the PCs have survived an ambush and someone made it back here to report, in which case one of the wererats lurks on the roof of the building and watches for the PCs' approach.

1. ENTRY ROOM (EL 2)

This cluttered office is filled with racks of clothes and other cloth items on hangers. A huge pile of soiled linens and cloth lies stacked near the southern door, behind a soggy wooden desk overloaded with papers.

This is where customers drop off and pick up their clothes, linens, and other orders. The "employees" of the workhouse don't do the best job, but the price is right for many of the more frugal citizens and buisnessfolk in town. The stack of papers on the desk are receipts, tax forms, and other documents, some of which date back more than a century.

During the night, the door to the north is kept locked.

Front Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 16; Open Lock DC 20.

Creatures: A single wererat named Krikit mans this room during daytime hours. She takes orders and generally serves as the public face of the operation. After dark she can usually be found in area 6.

Krikit, Human Wererat War1: hp 11; *Monster Manual* 173.

Development: If the wererats expect the PCs, the front door is locked even during the day and Krikit waits for the PCs with the others in area 2.

2. WORKHOUSE FLOOR (EL 5 IF WERERATS ARE ALERTED)

The air in this large room is bitter and acrid. The floor is dominated by six stone vats, each filled with dingy gray soapy water. The ceiling is nearly 30 feet high, and halfway up a rickety-looking wood-and-metal platform encircles the room, with a short walkway extending over the center of the room. Three ladders in the corners of the room provide access to the walkway.

The vats are filled with crude alchemical bleach and dirty water. The fumes from this concoction are quite foul, and anyone not used to the stench must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 12) or become nauseated for 1d6 rounds. A character that actually falls into one of the 3-foot-deep vats suffers a –4 penalty on this saving throw.

The walkway above is supported by an intricate network of cross-beams and pillars. Clambering up these supports is relatively simple, even with the slippery coating of moisture that clings to them. A successful Climb check (DC 12) is required to climb the supports.

Creatures: During the day, twenty indentured and nearly hopeless workers (all Com1) toil in the vats. Many of these workers are sick, and all of them are useless in combat. If fighting breaks out, the workers panic and flee to area 3.

At night, this room is empty. If the wererats expect the PCs to come knocking, Abercankus, Krikit, and Mosh

gather on the railing above with their crossbows and open fire on the PCs as soon as they enter.

Abercankus, Krikit, and Mosh, Human Wererat War1: hp 16, 11, 10; *Monster Manual* 173.

3. SLOP HOUSE AND STORAGE

A vile-smelling kitchen set in the northeast corner of this damp room overlooks a dirty cold chamber with long tables and benches. To the south, large barrels and crates are stacked from floor to ceiling, nearly obscuring a door in the wall.

This is where the workers eat their two daily meals. The food stores include barrels of grisly salted meat, oats and hard bread. The barrels and crates to the south are used to store chemicals and materials for the workhouse.

The door in the southern wall is kept barred from within. The door is remarkably strong and reinforced, unlike most other doors in this building. Beyond is a narrow wooden staircase that descends to a passageway that leads to area 8.

Sturdy Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 22; Open Lock DC 25.

4. WALKWAY

These walkways are about 15 feet off the ground below. The railings around the walkways are horribly weak and offer no real protection against falls. Characters fighting on the balcony must make a successful Balance check each round (DC 12) or slip and fall. A character who falls lands in a bleach-filled vat if he fails a Reflex saving throw (DC 10).

5. DORMITORY

This is a cold dirty room crammed with ten soggy and moldy bunk beds. Half as many chamber pots sit on the floor. Large cockroaches scuttle along the floorboards, and fleas hop merrily on the coarse brown sheets that are draped over the bed frames, each of which has a wretchedly thin stained mattress and a single dank pillow.

The workers spend tragically little of their dreary lives resting in this filthy room.

6. WERERAT BARRACKS (EL 4 IF WERERATS PRESENT)

This room contains four fairly comfortable-looking straw beds arranged around a wooden table. Two handfuls of dice sit on the tabletop, along with several empty mugs.

This is where Muddletude's four wererat allies rest and relax.

Creatures: Although there are four beds, chances are that at least one of the wererats who lives here (Crump) didn't make it back from an ambush. Krikit spends most of her time in area 1, leaving Abercankus and Mosh here. If the PCs make it this far without alerting them, one of them tries to reach Max's room to warn him while the other tries to hold the PCs off.

Abercankus and Mosh, Human Wererat War1: hp 16, 10; *Monster Manual* 173.

7. MUDDLETUDE'S ROOM (EL 4)

This fine chamber holds a huge fireplace and grand four-poster bed. The pervasive smell of bleach is almost unnoticible in this chamber, mostly due to the seven lit incense burners attached to the walls. A full-size portrait of a strange old gnome with a frayed beard hangs on the wall by the bed, whilst a fine mahogany writing table stands nearby.

Finding this extravagant room should come as something of a shock to the PCs after wading through the filthy outer chambers of the workhouse.

Creature: Max Muddletude spends a fair portion of his time in various taverns and high-class inns throughout Muffin's Honor, but since the devils returned he's spent most of his time here. He wants to be close at hand if Zorith needs his assistance.

Max Muddletude, Venerable Gnome Afflicted Wererat Ari3/Rog1: CR 4; Medium humanoid (gnome, shapechanger); HD 4d8+1d6–14; hp 7; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp –4; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d6–1/18–20, +1 *rapier*) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20; masterwork light crossbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ alternate form, low-light vision, rat empathy, scent, trapfinding; AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 6, Dex 10, Con 4, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 16.

Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +10, Climb +10, Control Shape +7, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Hide +6, Intimidate +7, Listen +10, Sense Motive +5, Spot +10, Swim +8.

Feats: Alertness[B], Negotiator, Persuasive, Weapon Finesse[B].

Languages: Common, Gnome, Infernal.

Hybrid Form: As gnome form except: Init +3; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Atk +7 melee (1d6–1/18–20, +1 *rapier*) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20; masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6–1/18–20, +1 *rapier*) and +1 melee (1d6–2 plus disease, bite) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20; masterwork light crossbow); SA curse of lycanthropy, disease, sneak attack +1d6; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver, low-light vision, rat empathy, scent, trapfinding; SV Fort +1, Ref +8; Dex 16, Con 6.

Dire Rat Form: As hybrid form except: Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d6–2 plus disease, bite).

Possessions: *+1 rapier*, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, tanglefoot bag, 45 pp in black purse, silver hipflask depicting cats chasing dogs worth 25 gp, noble's clothing.

Tactics: If Max hears combat break out in the outer room, he changes into hybrid form, hides behind the desk, and readies a shot with his crossbow against anyone who enters the room. He then abandons his crossbow and fights in melee, trusting his damage reduction to protect him from harm. If any damage penetrates his damage reduction, he panics and tries to flee. Max does not surrender, though; he's too paranoid about the wrath of the devils if he were to be captured.

Treasure: The desk contains numerous legal papers as well as a fine silver writing set worth 100 gp. A successful Search check (DC 20) uncovers a hidden compartment at the back of the desk. Inside this compartment are Max's life savings; 420 gp parceled out in tiny leather pouches, 20 gp to a pouch.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Award experience for Max as if he were a CR 4 creature since his age has drastically reduced his combat ability.

8. THE DEVIL'S BANQUET (EL 6)

This room presents a somewhat unexpected view: a large oak table nearly overburdened with food and drink, including nearly a dozen different bottles of wine. Three large padded leather chairs are drawn up to the table, and at the head of the table sits a gold-painted throne. Tapestries adorn the walls, and numerous thick throw rugs and pillows lie heaped upon the floor. A large number of holes in the walls testify to the presence of rats. Several dead chickens are piled in a nearby corner.

Muddletude used this room to store materials for the workhouse before Zorith came back. When the devils arrived, Muddletude moved the contents of this room upstairs. The imps have been stocking the room with stolen furniture, food, and drink to keep Zorith entertained while he waits to return to his proper size.

The rat holes were once used by the wererats and their rat allies to sneak into and out of the workhouse, but since the devils arrived these tunnels have been unused. The dead chickens are a morbid testament to the devils' diabolic boredom over the past few days.

Creatures: If the devils aren't expecting the PCs to find their hideout, 1d2 of the imps are present here along with the shrunken chain devil; those imps that are missing are out looking for more food and drink in the city. If the devils are expecting a visit, all three imps are here. In either case, they trust that their wererat allies above can handle the PCs, so unless the party makes an excessive amount of clatter approaching this room they may well be caught off guard. Assume that all four devils are taking 10 on their Listen and Spot checks; thus, in order to catch them by surprise the PCs must make DC 23 with their Hide and Move Silently checks.

Glister, Matilda, and Ognort, Imps: hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 56.

Zorith, Shrunken and Cranky Chain Devil: CR 6; Tiny outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 8d8+8; hp 44; Init +10; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +8; Grp –2; Atk +9 melee (1d4–2, chain); Full Atk +9 melee (1d4–2, 2 chains); Space/Reach 2 1/2 ft./0 ft. (5 ft. with chains); SA dancing chains, unnerving gaze; SQ damage reduction 5/silver or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, regeneration 2, spell resistance 18; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 7, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +9, Craft (blacksmithing) +17, Escape Artist +15, Hide +12, Intimidate +12, Listen +13, Spot +13, Use Rope +4 (+6 with bindings).

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (chain).

Languages: Common, Infernal.

Tactics: The imps are cowardly but sneaky. They hang back and let Zorith do most of the fighting while they use *suggestion* to throw chaos into the ranks. If the PCs have the *devil box* with them, a possible *suggestion* could be that the kobolds have been tricking them and that the *devil box* actually catches non-devils. Zorith does not flee, and as long as Zorith lives the imps are too afraid to flee as well. If Zorith falls, however, the imps flee.

If the PCs bring the *devil box* with them, Zorith's bravery vanishes instantly. His primary concern becomes escape,

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

Though this adventure is designed for four 2nd-level characters, it can be adapted for higher and lower levels.

1st-level characters: All NPCs with class levels should have their level reduced by one. In the ambush encounter, remove three of the dire rats. Remove one or two of the imps from the adventure, and replace the wererats with human warriors.

3rd- through 4th-level characters: All NPCs with class levels should have their level increased by one. The wererats should become 1st- or 2nd-level rogues rather than 1st-level warriors. Advance each of the imps by 2 Hit Dice, and reduce the time left for the kyton to return to normal size by one or even two days.

in which case he and his imps flee into the rat tunnels to escape outside. The rat tunnels emerge onto the riverbank just south of the workhouse, and it takes 2d4 rounds for the devils to navigate the tunnels. Once they get outside, the imps carry Zorith and take to the skies, not bothering to stop and take the time to turn invisible. Their exit is observed by several local citizens who are only too glad to brag to the PCs about the crazy swarm of devils they saw fly off to the east.

Treasure: The imps have stolen much in the few days they've been in town. This stolen loot consists of four tapestries depicting angelic scenes worth 100 gp each, five exquisite throw rugs worth 200 gp each, six silver goblets worth 25 gp each, a glass decanter with copper banding worth 30 gp, a gold tureen worth 400 gp, and 11 dead chickens.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Zorith's reduced size makes him do less damage in combat. As a result, award 75% normal experience points for his defeat.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Defeating Zorith should be a difficult task, even if the PCs rescue Lumbie and he uses the *devil box* against the devil. Of course, rescuing Lumbie isn't the only way to defeat Zorith. A character with Use Magic Device might be able to activate the *devil box* with a particularly good roll. It's also possible to simply defeat Zorith in combat, although such a tactic may require multiple assaults on the devil.

At midnight on the third day after the adventure begins, Zorith returns to full size. The chain devil immediately brings despair and terror to Muffin's Honor, stalking and killing one or two townsfolk nightly. He continues to use his imp allies as scouts and spies, and as a result stays fairly well-informed about current events in the town. Once townsfolk start turning up dead and wrapped in razor-sharp chains, however, the town's leaders quickly become more willing to listen to the PCs' stories about devils and kobolds, and do what they can to help catch the kyton.

Once Zorith is defeated, the kobolds seek to return as soon as possible. They take the *devil box* with them (whether or not Zorith is inside) unless the PCs take it from them by force. Of course, doing so enrages the kobolds. If the PCs and the kobolds part on friendly terms, they may be able to start building upon this friendship and forge a time of peace between the kobolds of Clan Gnurka and the citizens of Muffin's Honor. In any case, the kobolds appreciate the help the PCs gave them, and a week or so after Raspit and Chupo leave them, the PCs receive a shipment of several fine gemstones the kobolds collected for them as a reward. The total value of the gemstones should equal 500 gp per PC.

Finally, there's the question of what becomes of Lumbie. The freakishly large kobold has no real interest in going "home" with the other kobolds. He could become a faithful ally or companion of one of the PCs, and may even at some point become a cohort if a PC takes the Leadership feat. If left to his own devices, Lumbie wanders off into the wilderness to a fate determined by the DM. Ω

Richard Pett lives on the outskirts of Sherwood Forest in England, where he is engaged in constant battles with a huge colony of ropers who keep stealing his poultry. He's been writing adventures for 25 years and is currently working on a Victorian gothic novel brimming with undead, rats, and shifty politicians. This is his second adventure in Dungeon, *and he hopes you enjoy his as much as he enjoys everyone else's (massive praise to Greg Vaughan's "Tammeraut's Fate"—a classic!)*

BY TONY MOSELEY

CODE ORANGE ALERT! F.E.A.R. IS HERE!

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FASCIST EXTREMIST ARMED REVOLUTION

By Rodney Thompson
Illustrations by Andy Smith, colors by Michael Atiyeh

INTRODUCTION

The modern world does not wage war the way it used to. The rules have changed, and with them so too have the enemies of freedom. Terrorism is the order of the day, and no country is exempt from its presence. Recognized terrorist organizations fill the headlines of global newspapers, but one organization stands out as the most dangerous and most exotic of the group. The Fascist Extremist Armed Revolution, commonly referred to as FEAR, is an organization not to be taken lightly.

Some governments define FEAR as political activists; others as terrorists, organized criminals, mercenaries, or even as a military-in-exile. The INTERPOL Fusion Task Force lists agents of FEAR in all of its terrorist and organized crime databases as both hostile and extremely dangerous. Every single member of FEAR is red-flagged as "to be captured and brought in immediately," and more radical countries have declared that all identified members of FEAR are to be shot on sight. Regardless of border, nationality, political views, or current enemies and allies, almost every nation in the world recognizes FEAR as a wild-card group that is too effective to be allowed to continue to function. Agents of FEAR usually display the organization's emblem: a ghostly blue skull.

FEAR holds absolutely no allegiances, not to any country, ideal, or even to money. FEAR has only one goal: world conquest. Though for the time being the organization lacks the resources and manpower to begin conquering entire nations, FEAR continues to move throughout the world, coercing nations into war with one another in the hopes of weakening the military might of all countries. Currently, INTERPOL suspects that FEAR is working to destabilize the world's most powerful militaries in order to eliminate the largest threats to their existence.

Though smaller than the armies of most nations, FEAR boasts a sizeable membership with a roster of generals and leaders that sounds like the colorful cast of a television serial. The group is fascist only in that they wish to put everyone under their strict control, and only global domination will suit them. The paramilitary forces of FEAR function as small combat units and rarely engage in open warfare with large-scale armies, though if the time came for the group to seize power it is likely that the well-trained and well-equipped soldiers of FEAR would have little difficulty with anything short of a first-world country's armed forces. For the time being, FEAR contents itself with small-scale terrorism, organized crime, mercenary work, assassinations, and other similar activities.

THE OVERLORD

INTERPOL's most wanted list has changed greatly over the years as targets died or were apprehended, but one name has remained at the top for decades: the Overlord. Known only by his codename and association with FEAR, the Overlord has plagued the free world since the days of the Vietnam War. At one point, the Overlord was little more than a gun-runner suspected of working with Central American communist armies to thwart American ambitions in the region. Over time, his lucrative smuggling career evolved into an illegal arms empire, and he founded FEAR soon afterward. With millions (or possibly billions, if some rumors are to be believed) of dollars in dirty money in private bank accounts around the world, the Overlord has privately funded his war of global domination since the organization began.

The Overlord handles almost every aspect of FEAR's operation. Although he leaves some of the minor details in the hands of his agents and lieutenants, the Overlord is sure to keep a close eye on the various activities of his organization out of paranoia that his underlings might be plotting against him. In this case, he is correct, as his second-in-command has long plotted, and even attempted, to overthrow the Overlord and seize control of the organization for himself. In addition to his meticulous management of FEAR operations, the Overlord personally oversaw the creation and training regimen of his masked phantom troopers, recognizing the need for expendable shock troops when indirect warfare became impractical. Additionally, the Overlord brokers most of the organization's deals with governments and criminal organizations, acting as both commander and liaison whenever possible. The Overlord is not afraid to send his agents on any mission, and has absolutely no scruples whatsoever. Lying, betrayal, and murder

NEW FEAT: TERRIFYING PRESENCE

You are far more than merely frightening, and instill abject terror in opponents that dare to face you.

Prerequisites: Frightful Presence.

Benefit: Whenever you successfully make use of the Frightful Presence feat, the penalty opponents suffer on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks increases to –4.

Normal: When using the Frightful Presence feat, opponents suffer a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks.

Special: This feat may be selected as part of the Charismatic hero's bonus feat list.

are his favorite pastimes, and the word of the Overlord is as far from trustworthy as one can get.

The Overlord is a paranoid man whose real name and identity are unknown to everyone but himself. In order to protect his identity from the rest of the world, the Overlord wears a special helmet that projects a hologram over his face. The hologram is that of an ethereal skull, animated so as to appear to speak and move just the same as his own face might. The Overlord also wears a distinct set of blue body armor, segmented and overlapping to allow for freedom of movement, though no FEAR emblem adorns his clothing. The Overlord is a huge man, almost brutish in appearance, muscular and towering a head above the next tallest member of FEAR. His size, mysterious appearance, and absolute and utter ruthlessness have earned him respect and the reputation of being the perfect man to lead FEAR to victory.

The Overlord: (Charismatic 9/Soldier 8); CR 17; Medium-size human; HD 9d6+27 plus 8d10+24; hp 126; Mas 16; Init +7 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative, +2 Improved Reaction); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 28, touch 19, flat-footed 28 (+9 class, +9 armor); BAB +12; Grap +16; Atk +16/+11/+6 melee (1d6+5, unarmed strike), or +15/+10/+5 ranged (2d8+4/19–20, H&K TMP7 SMG); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ coordinate, dazzle, fast-talk, greater inspiration, improved critical (TMP7 SMG), greater weapon focus (TMP7 SMG), weapon specialization (TMP7 SMG); AL FEAR; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +9; AP 14; Rep +9; Wealth +18; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 18.

OVERLORD

NIGHTMARE

Occupation: Criminal (bonus class skills: Disable Device, Hide).

Skills: Bluff +20, Demolitions +8, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +4, Disguise +10, Gather Information +16, Hide +1, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (tactics) +10, Listen +6, Profession (mercenary) +10, Spot +12.

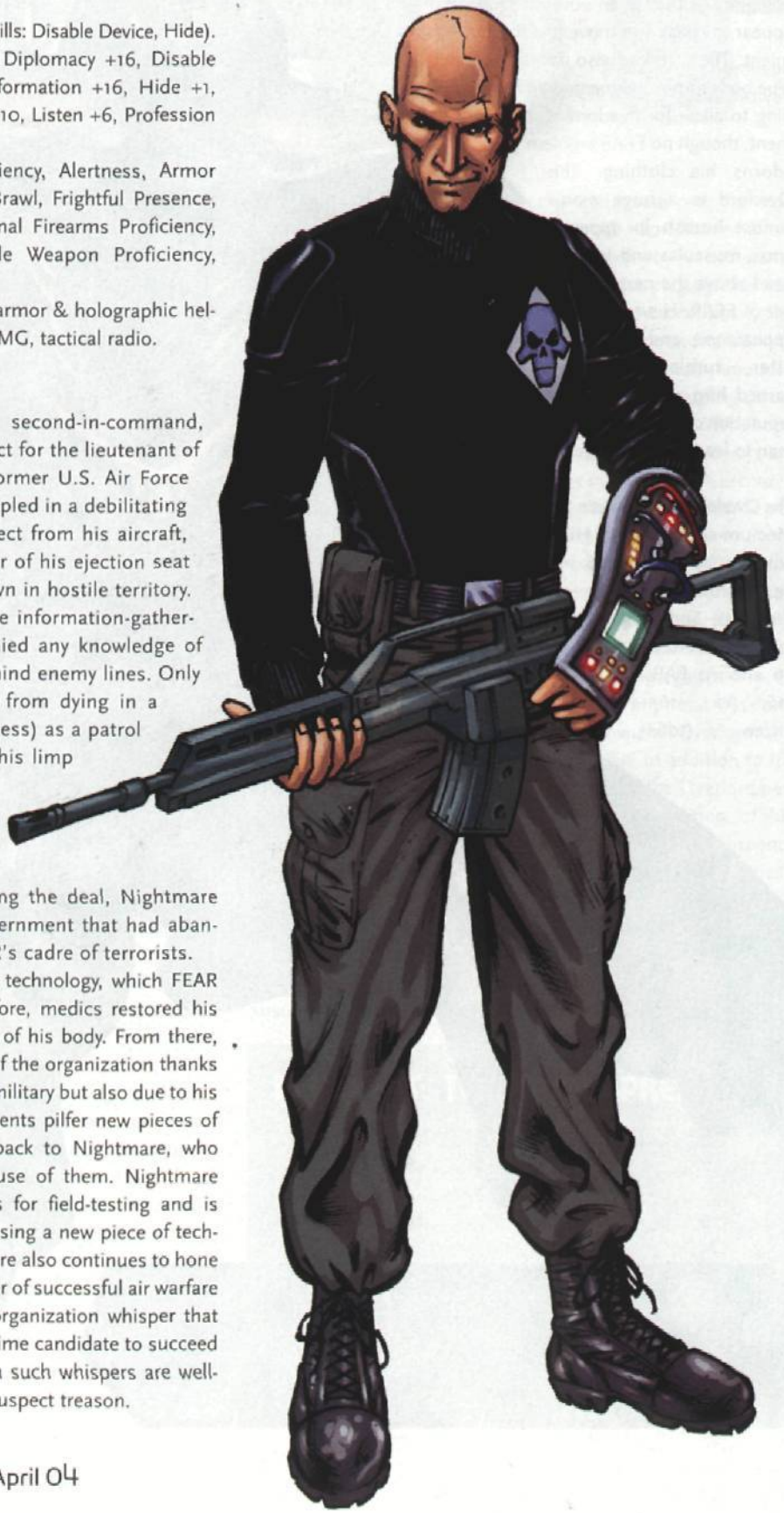
Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Armor Proficiency (heavy, light, medium), Brawl, Frightful Presence, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Renown, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Terrifying Presence, Windfall.

Possessions: FEAR Overlord body armor & holographic helmet (forced entry unit), H&K TMP7 SMG, tactical radio.

NIGHTMARE

Recognized universally as FEAR's second-in-command, Nightmare seems an unlikely suspect for the lieutenant of a global terrorist organization. A former U.S. Air Force covert pilot, Nightmare became crippled in a debilitating plane crash. As he attempted to eject from his aircraft, fragments of the jet pierced the rear of his ejection seat and severed his spine. He went down in hostile territory. Since his mission was a clandestine information-gathering operation, the government denied any knowledge of his existence and left him to rot behind enemy lines. Only a stroke of luck saved Nightmare from dying in a prison camp (or even in the wilderness) as a patrol of phantom troopers came across his limp body and brought him back to their base. There, he was given a choice: join FEAR, or be given over to his enemies. With promises of medical attention sweetening the deal, Nightmare chose not to put his faith in a government that had abandoned him and instead joined FEAR's cadre of terrorists.

Utilizing the latest in spine repair technology, which FEAR agents had stolen mere months before, medics restored his ability to feel and use the lower half of his body. From there, Nightmare quickly rose in the ranks of the organization thanks not only to his experience in the U.S. military but also due to his affinity for machines. When FEAR agents pilfer new pieces of technology, they bring their booty back to Nightmare, who determines the best way to make use of them. Nightmare always carries a number of gadgets for field-testing and is unpredictable due to his affinity for using a new piece of technology to alter any situation. Nightmare also continues to hone his piloting skills and has led a number of successful air warfare operations. Other members of the organization whisper that Nightmare's intellect makes him a prime candidate to succeed the Overlord upon his death, though such whispers are well-guarded lest FEAR's ruthless leader suspect treason.



DISC EXPLOSIVES

Nightmare's most popular invention among the rank and file members of FEAR is the disc explosive device, also known as a DED. The DED is a small metal disc that measures roughly four inches in diameter and carries inside it a powerful explosive charge. The flat side of the disc attaches to almost any surface, either through magnetism if the surface is metal or through microscopic barbs if not. Once attached to a target, DEDs can either be detonated by remote or by simply twisting the DED clockwise, which arms a timer depending on how far the disc is turned. These explosives are a favorite of Glacier's because they are small, portable, stable, and can be surreptitiously placed at key structural pressure points with ease and without attracting attention.

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Burst Radius	Reflex DC.	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Disc Explosive Device	3d6	—	Concussion	10 ft	15	—	Tiny	1 lb.	20

Nightmare is a man in his late thirties with a gaunt face and haunted eyes. A jagged scar runs from one eyebrow over the top of his bald head, the only visible remnant of his life-changing plane crash. On one hand he wears a special computer interface device resembling a chain-link glove with gaps spanned by wires across his palm and fingers. Like most terrorist lieutenants, Nightmare has aspirations to one day take over his organization and lead the group himself, but so far has been unable to stage an effective coup d'etat thanks to the Overlord's intimate knowledge of his injuries. In fact, the only reason the Overlord keeps him around despite his occasional open rebellion is the hope that one day Nightmare will help him construct a doomsday device capable of leveling the playing field between FEAR and the nations of the world.

Nightmare: (Smart 7/Techie 8); CR 15; Medium-size human; HD 7d6 plus 8d6; hp 57; Mas 10; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; Defense 18, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 class); BAB +7; Grap +7; Atk +7/+2 melee (1d3, unarmed strike) or +9/+4 ranged (2d8, G36 assault rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ build robot, exploit weakness, extreme machine, jury-rig +4, mastercraft (electronic, mechanical) +1, plan, savant (repair), trick; AL FEAR; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +14; AP 13; Rep +5; Wealth +12; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Occupation: Military (bonus class skills: Navigate, Pilot).

Skills: Bluff +11, Computer Use +16, Craft (electronics) +18, Craft (mechanics) +18, Demolitions +12, Disable Device +9, Drive +8, Forgery +9, Intimidate +10, Investigate +9, Knowledge (technology) +12, Navigate +6, Pilot +11, Profession (mercenary) +8, Repair +20, Research +12, Search +10, Spot +6.

Feats: Aircraft Operation, Builder, Combat Expertise, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Elusive Target, Gearhead, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Vehicle Expert.

Possessions: H&K G36 assault rifle, combat jumpsuit, computer interface glove, tactical radio, miscellaneous gadgets.

GLACIER

While most members of FEAR enjoy their position in the organization, at least one prominent member does not. The agent codenamed Glacier is a hardened assassin capable of the coldest acts of murder, but at the same time is an unwilling member of the terrorist organization. Glacier was once a peerless assassin-for-hire who traveled the globe looking for jobs with lucrative paychecks. During an operation in a third-world nation, the Overlord discovered the secret that Glacier had worked so hard to keep. Glacier, the unemotional killer, had a young son with a life-threatening illness back in America. Unfortunately, the only way that he could afford treatment was to earn money as a freelance assassin, money which was sent back to the United States to pay for the expensive procedures needed to keep his son alive. Along came the Overlord, who threatened to sell his secret to Glacier's many enemies, effectively blackmailing the assassin into joining the ranks of FEAR.

Now Glacier pays for his son's treatments with money funneled to him from FEAR's treasury. The Overlord keeps the assassin under his thumb through the threat of withholding the money. Glacier is a reluctant agent who moves throughout the world doing the bidding of his masters in FEAR. Glacier specializes in explosives of all kinds and is particularly good at public assassinations designed to send a message. If it can be detonated, chances are that Glacier knows how to use it as an effective tool in destroying a life. Some of Glacier's most famous assassinations include blowing up the private jet of a former UN Secretary General, the public death of a US Army colonel by collapsing the stage from which he was delivering a speech, and the murder of a wealthy European oil baron via the detonation of one of his own oil tankers. Glacier is very good at what he does, and his work has baffled bomb squads and specialists around the world for decades.

Glacier takes his codename from his demeanor: cold and patient. Glacier refuses to socialize with other members of FEAR and rarely even speaks more than a few words to his own commanders. Glacier is in good shape for a middle-aged man and has a shock of white hair atop his head with a slight widow's peak. He wears a pair of urban camouflage fatigue pants and a black kevlar vest, to which a number of grenades

GLACIER

and explosives are attached. His hands are covered by a pair of gloves bearing the FEAR insignia, along with a belt with the FEAR skull as the belt buckle.

Glacier: (Smart 7/Soldier 6); CR 13; Medium-size human; HD 7d6+2 plus 6d10+2; hp 81; Mas 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 17, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +5 class); BAB +7; Grap +8; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d3, unarmed strike), or +9 ranged (2d6, white phosphorous grenade), or +10 ranged (6d6+2, thermite grenade), or +9 ranged (4d6, fragmentation grenade), or +9/+4 ranged (2d8, Colt M4A1); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ exploit weakness, plan, savant (demolitions), tactical aid, trick, weapon focus (thermite grenade), weapon specialization (thermite grenade); AL FEAR; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +10; AP 8; Rep +7; Wealth +7; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Occupation: Criminal (bonus class skills: Disable Device, Hide).

Skills: Balance +8, Computer Use +12, Concentration +11, Demolitions +20, Disable Device +15, Forgery +8, Hide +10, Intimidate +10, Investigate +6, Knowledge (tactics) +9, Listen +9, Profession (assassin) +8, Repair +10, Research +8, Search +8, Spot +10, Survival +8.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Burst Fire, Cautious, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Focused, Gearhead, Heroic Surge, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track.

Possessions: DED (×10), Fragmentation grenade (×6), Colt M4A1 assault rifle, semtex charge (×4), tactical radio, thermite grenade (×4), white phosphorous grenade (×4).

JESTER

As might be expected of a dangerous criminal organization, not every member of FEAR is entirely sane. Such is the case with Jester, FEAR's foremost gunslinger, sniper, and overall loose cannon. Jester is a former member of the Russian mafia whose penchant for firearms earned her a high rank in the crime syndicate. Unfortunately, her lack of restraint (and the general feeling of unease she instilled in the other members of the mafia) eventually led to her exile and placement on the mob's hit list. Jester was surprised to find out that summary executions of other members of the mafia were not encouraged, even if they did have it coming. Her exile and search for a new home led her to FEAR's ranks, where she not only found a place to continue her previous lifestyle but also a relative amount of safety from the Russians. The price remains on her head, but bounty hunters are no longer as eager to take her as their quarry so long as she remains a prominent member of FEAR.

JESTER

Jester coordinates many of the high-firepower operations undertaken by the organization. She is an active field leader and prefers to be right in the thick of combat. It is here that she is at her most disconcerting; when engaged in firefights and brawls, Jester has a tendency to laugh maniacally as she pumps round after round of ammunition at the enemy. Equally as disturbing is her obvious sadism and relentlessness on the battlefield; Jester frequently hunts down enemy forces to the last man and does not stop her relentless pursuit until she is satisfied that no enemy forces remain alive. Jester takes no prisoners, which is the reason that the Overlord chooses her for missions calling for total extermination of the enemy. In addition to serving as a field general, Jester also assists Glacier from time to time on assassination missions, though her penchant for preemptive aggression makes her unfit for true stealth.

Jester is an attractive woman with green eyes and flame-red hair, belying some western European heritage in her background. She always carries an impressive array of firearms on her person, from pistols to a collapsible sniper rifle, and secrets clips of ammunition in hidden pockets sewn into her garments. On some field missions she wears the standard issue uniform of the phantom trooper, but otherwise she wears a dark blue breastplate (with the FEAR logo etched in black into the armor) custom designed to be form-fitting and sleek, with a pair of black pants covered with overlapping black armor plates. A pair of tattoos lead from the corners of her eyes down her cheek like a pair of fangs.

Jester: (Fast 3/Gunslinger 10); CR 13; Medium-size human; HD 3d8 plus 10d10; hp 78; Mas 11; Init +3; Spd 25 ft; Defense 31, touch 26, flat-footed 28 (+3 Dex, +13 class, +5 armor); BAB +9; Grap +9; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d3, unarmed strike), or +14/+9 ranged (2d6, Beretta 93R), or +12/+7 ranged (2d8, Desert Eagle), or +12/+7 ranged (2d10, H&K SL95D); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ bullseye (Beretta 93R), close combat shot, defensive position, greater weapon focus (Beretta 93R), lightning shot, sharp-shooting; AL FEAR; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +6; AP 13; Rep +4; Wealth +9; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Occupation: Criminal (bonus class skills: Hide, Move Silently).

Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +10, Drive +8, Escape Artist +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (streetwise) +6, Move Silently +6, Profession (mercenary) +6, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +9, Tumble +11.

NEW WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION

Agents of FEAR equip themselves with some of the latest military technology currently available on the world's blackest markets. Statistics for weapons cited in this article are provided below.

Name	Damage	Crit.	Dam. Type	Range Inc.	Rate of Fire	Caliber	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Res.
H&K TMP7	2d8	20	Ballistic	70 ft.	S, A	4.6×30mm	50 box	Large	8 lb.	21	Res (+2)
H&K G36K	2d8	20	Ballistic	70 ft.	S, A	5.56×45mm	30 box	Large	8 lb.	20	Res (+2)
Colt M4A1	2d8	20	Ballistic	70 ft.	S, A	5.56×45mm	30 box	Large	7 lb.	18	Res (+2)
H&K SL95D	2d10	20	Ballistic	100 ft.	Single	7.62×37mm	30 box	Large	10 lb.	22	Lic (+1)
AK-74 SU	2d8	20	Ballistic	70 ft.	S, A	5.45×40mm	30 box	Large	9 lb.	17	Res (+2)

Caliber	Ammo Type	Damage	Purchase DC
4.6×30mm	Ball	2d8	7
5.45×40mm	Ball	2d8	5
5.56×45mm	Ball	2d8	4
7.62×37mm	Ball	2d10	5

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light, medium), Burst Fire, Double Tap, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Strafe.

Possessions: Beretta 93R (×2), combat breastplate, Desert Eagle, H&K SL95D sniper rifle, tactical radio.

PHANTOM TROOPER

Not every member of FEAR can be a leader, and the rank-and-file soldiers of the organization are among the most dedicated and obedient agents in the entire group. Known commonly as phantom troopers, these soldiers serve as the faceless hordes sent to wreak havoc on the group's enemies. Phantom troopers wear solid black commando jumpsuits with load-bearing shoulder harnesses and belts, as well as an array of combat gear draped over their bodies. Shoulder pads bearing the FEAR insignia complete the body portion of the outfit, along with a pair of kneepads designed to lessen the shock of dropping to a more compact firing position. Each phantom trooper has a black mask with an opening for the eyes, which are usually covered by a pair of glare-dampening/night-vision goggles. Additionally, each phantom trooper has the ghostly skull insignia of FEAR emblazoned on his or her chest in a faint shade of blue. Since anonymity is key to the success of the phantoms, each trooper wears a special device taped to their throats that alters their voices and gives them a deep and frightening sound.

Phantom Trooper: (Tough 3); CR 3; Medium-size human; HD 3d10+1; hp 25; Mas 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 class); BAB +2; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3+1, unarmed strike), or +3 ranged (2d8, AK-74 SU) or +3 ranged (4d6, fragmentation grenade); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Damage Reduction 2/—; AL FEAR; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AP 3; Rep +1; Wealth +6; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Occupation: Military (bonus class skills: Demolitions, Move Silently).

Skills: Concentration +2, Demolitions +4, Intimidate +2, Move Silently +5, Profession (mercenary) +2, Spot +4.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Double Tap, Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: AK-74 SU assault rifle, combat jumpsuit, fragmentation grenade (×6), night-vision goggles, tactical radio. ●

Rodney Thompson is the author of the Star Wars Hero's Guide and a member of AEG's Spycraft/Shadowforce Archer Design Team.

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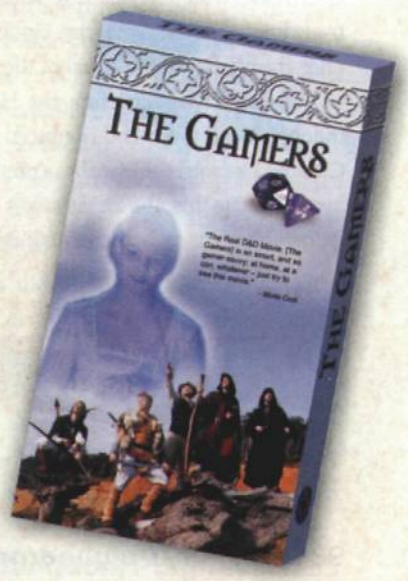

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HARDBY: CITY OF THE SCORNED

By Paul Looby

Lying on the northern shores of Woolly Bay, the port of Hardby was once a free city with a proud history longer even than that of its more illustrious northern neighbor, the city of Greyhawk. Uniquely, Hardby was ruled by women, collectively known as the Gynarchy. Under their leadership the city once counted itself the equal of the Gem of the Flanaess.

The Greyhawk Wars brought Hardby's long tradition of independence to an end. Reduced to a vassal of Greyhawk City, the Despotrix of Hardby is now little more than a figurehead. Despite this, the long shadow that Greyhawk casts over its neighbor conceals the machinations of many who would see the Free City humbled. The shame and anger of its enslavement have made Hardby a nexus for Greyhawk's foes.

A busy sea port, Hardby is the gateway between the central Flanaess and the realms of the south. News of the war in Onnwal, whispers of the fabulous wealth of the new overking of Ahlissa, and tall tales of the strange, sweltering jungles of Hepmonaland are all to be found in the city's taverns. Vessels bound for these destinations and many others throng the harbor. Adventurers intent on exploring the rugged and dangerous southern Abbor-Alz or the Bright Desert beyond often make Hardby their base. Some

return with fabulous wealth or tales of Rary the Traitor. Most do not return at all.

Within the walls of Hardby itself, plots multiply among the disparate factions vying for control of the city. The despotrix is dying, and already the struggle to succeed her rages among the gynarchs. Even as they bicker, sinister foreign powers seek to exploit the city's internal divisions to their own ends. Hardby yearns to free itself from Greyhawk's yoke, but in doing so it may replace one set of shackles with another.

The Gynarchy

The Suel mage Ena Norbe founded the Gynarchy of Hardby. A follower of Wee Jas, Norbe grew up hearing tales of the folly of the men who caused the fall of the Suel Imperium. Thus when she founded her own settlement, she was determined that it would never suffer from the rash foolishness and brutal violence that characterized the rule of men. Norbe therefore decreed that only women would be allowed to rule Hardby.

The first gynarch bore six daughters who, like their mother, became puissant mages. From them are descended the Six Great Families of Hardby that serve as the foundation of the gynarchy to this day. In the early centuries, the eldest woman among the Six Families became gynarch upon the death of her predecessor. While this meant that the gynarchs' reigns were often short, it also ensured that their rule was tempered with the wisdom of age.

Between 254 and 351 CY, the title of gynarch was hereditary within the family of Yragerne alone. As a result, in 339 CY, Zagig Yragerne became Hardby's only Despot in his role as the Landgraf of Selintan. He afterward renounced the title, however, and the gynarchs of the five remaining Families elected one of their number to serve as Supreme Gynarch and Despotrix until her death, a system that persists to this day.

The gynarchs are drawn from five of the six original Families (Norbelos, Gerneskir, Jonnosh, Havelos, and Maynem) and a sixth family, Longland, elevated to replace the Yragerne when Zagig vanished in 421 CY, leaving no issue. There are never more than forty gynarchs at one time. Each Family nominates six gynarchs, while the reigning despotrix chooses a further three gynarchs as her personal advisors. Each gynarch in turn chooses a didatrix from the ranks of the Six Families, to act as her personal secretary, annalist, and herald. Most gynarchs serve time as didatrixes before gaining promotion.

Although the Gynarchy has had no official powers since the Merchants' Coup of 517 CY, they have expressed their will in more subtle ways. When the Merchants' Alliance took power, their leaders quickly found wives among the Six Families. Soon, the despotrix found that her wishes would, in no time at all, become the Trade Council's policy, often without even mentioning it to them directly. The pattern has repeated itself since Greyhawk took control of Hardby, and has earned the despotrix widespread respect and deference among the Hardby Marines and Greyhawk

Mountaineers, much to the alarm of the Directing Oligarchy of Greyhawk City.

It is an open secret that Despotrix Ilena is dying. Already, prospective successors are maneuvering for advantage. Chief amongst these is Gynarch Deirdre Longland, a doughty warrior in days past and, since the Greyhawk Wars, a champion of the church of Mayaheine. Deirdre holds the title of Justicar of Hardby, acting as the head of the city judiciary. Although she has the advantage of age, title, and experience, she is hampered by her lack of magical ability. Despotrixes past have usually been wizards.

Her main rival is Gynarch Aleeta Norbelos, who is not only a wizard and a judge, but the granddaughter of Despotrix Ilena. Though she is only 24, the young gynarch is popular for her staunchly anti-Greyhawk stance. Deirdre, on the other hand, has spoken of the need for cooperation between Hardby and Greyhawk against the twin threats of Turrosh Mak and Rary the Traitor.

The struggle between the two has divided the Gynarchy and led some to propose a compromise candidate in the form of **Bridara Norbelos of Hardfield** (N female human Wiz9), the eldest of the gynarchs. This would be the ideal solution, if Bridara had not spent her life assiduously avoiding politics. Although the matter is moot while Ilena yet lives, everyone in Hardby knows that the issue will be decided sooner rather than later.

The Hardby Merchants' Alliance

When the Pomarj fell to humanoid hordes, many refugees fled to the safety of Hardby. The mainly male leaders of the refugees found themselves excluded from governance, and worse still, belittled by Hardby's famously independent-minded women. Unwilling to tolerate this state of affairs, the refugees took control of the docks and the militia. Founding the Hardby Merchants' Alliance, they seized power in a bloodless coup. Much to the Alliance's surprise, the despotrix quietly accepted her deposal. Little were the merchants to know that the Gynarchy would have the last laugh.

The Alliance created the Trade Council, consisting of six merchants, six "rivermen" (dockers, pilots or military officers, and one judge), to rule Hardby. Half of the rivermen and merchants are elected every three years, while every five years the Watch and staff of the Law Courts nominate the judge, usually a member of the Gynarchy.

Where once the Trade Council had few official constraints on its powers (so long as it did what the despotrix wished), its remit is now greatly diminished. Since Greyhawk took control of Hardby, the rivermen councillors have been military officers loyal to the Directing Oligarchy. The Council is subordinate to the Military Governor and confined to discussion of strictly commercial matters. Even taxation is dictated from Greyhawk. A major cause for grievance is the waiver on tariffs given to members of the Greyhawk Union of Merchants and Traders shipping their cargoes through Hardby, a boon not extended to members of the Alliance. This has caused no small degree of resentment among Hardby's mercantile class.

The leader of the Alliance is **Perav Hulvir** (LN male human Exp8). A former longshoreman made good, Perav

THE CITY OF HARDBY

♛ **Hardby (small city):** Conventional; AL: LN; 15,000 gp; Assets: 3,825,000 gp; Population 5,100; Mixed (human 72%, half-orc 22%, halfling 2%, dwarf 1%, gnome 1%, half-elf 1%, elf 1%).

Authority Figures: Ilena Norbelos (NG female human Wiz13), Despotrix of Hardby; Wilbrem Carister (LN male human Ftr9), Military Governor of Hardby and Commander of the Hardby Marines; Retep Mandel (LE male human Rog5/Asn4), Chief Secretary to the Military Governor.

Important Characters: Deirdre Longland (LG female human Ftr8/Cav4), Gynarch and Justicar of Hardby; Aleeta Norbelos (NE female human Wiz7), Gynarch of Hardby and Judge of the Law Courts; Javka Gerneskir (NG female human Rog3/Clr3—Lirr), Didatrix to Despotrix Ilena; Mirlan Rinshand (LN male human Rog10), Factor of the Royal Guild of Merchants of Aerdy.

Temples: Ehlonna (forests, woodlands), Joramy (fire, volcanoes, wrath), Lirr (literature, art), Mayaheine (protection, justice, valor), Myrhiss (love, beauty), Norebo (luck, gambling), Osprem (sea voyages, sailors), Pelor (sun, light, healing, protection), Procan (seas, navigation), St. Cuthbert (common sense, wisdom, discipline), Wee Jas (magic, death, vanity), Xerbo (seaborne trade), Zilchus (power, money).

A Chronology of Hardby

5237 SD (–278 CY): The Suel mage Ena Norbe and her followers found Norbe Harbor. After plague and storms decimate the settlers, the town is renamed Hard Bay (later Hardby). Norbe declares herself Gynarch and decrees that only women will rule thereafter.

33 CY: Maro, daughter of Gynarch Ymara, marries Ganz, the son of Maret Nial, Landgraf of Selintan, sealing a pact of alliance between the two towns. Hardby becomes a palatine fief of the Landstadt of Selintan and the Great Kingdom.

205 CY—220 CY: Gynarch Jik Jonnosh comes to power, conquering and burning seven pirate towns north of Safeton along the Wild Coast. Under her rule, Hardby claims all lands within ten leagues of the north shore of Woolly Bay and reaches the zenith of its power.

is a broad, bullish man who makes up in raw cunning for what he lacks in education. Under his direction, the Alliance has begun consolidating Hardby's guilds with the message that though unity there is strength to overcome the current difficulties. Perav has recently become a drinking partner of Mirlan Rinshand, the local factor for the Royal Guild of Merchants of Aerdy. The only obvious outcome of these meetings has been a Royal Guild contract for several Alliance merchants to carry Ahlissan cargoes from Prymp to Hardby, much to the joy of the hard-pressed local traders.

Military

The Military Governor of Hardby is **Wilbrem Carister** (LN male human Ftr9), the commander of the Hardby Marines. Formerly a member of the Trade Council, Carister sold out his fellow councillors for command of the Marines and, less importantly in his view, the title of Military Governor. As such, he has the power to issue decrees on matters of security and other areas. Being a soldier rather than a ruler, however, he governs with a light touch, leaving most of the actual administration to his chief secretary, **Retep Mandel** (LE male human Rog5/Asn4).

Mandel is Hardby's Governor in all but name. A trusted lieutenant of Vesparian Lafanel, director of Greyhawk's infamous Assassin's Guild, his remit is to uncover and eliminate any threats to the Directing Oligarchy's dominance in Hardby. Mandel has a network of spies and informers monitoring both the Gynarchy and the Merchants' Alliance. He is also trying to increase the influence of the Greyhawk Thieves' Guild among the local criminal fraternity. Since Mandel's arrival, several vociferous opponents of Greyhawk have either recanted their opinions or simply vanished. Unsurprisingly, he is

254 CY: At the invitation of Gynarch Varasia Yragerne, Aerdi garrisons are stationed in Hardby. With the support of the Aerdi, Varasia makes the title of Gynarch hereditary within the Family of Yragerne.

277 CY: Aerdi troops are withdrawn. Zagig Yragerne is born in Hardby.

339 CY: Gynarch Eileme Yragerne dies. Her son, Zagig, becomes Landgraf of Selintan, and Despot of Hardby.

351 CY: Zagig relinquishes the title of Despot. Annarra Havelos is elected Supreme Gynarch and Despotrix of Hardby by her fellow gynarchs.

498 CY: The Landstadt of Selintan is abolished, restoring Hardby's full autonomy.

despised and feared in equal measure by both the Gynarchy and the Alliance.

The Hardby Marines protect the city from pirates and orc sea raiders from the Pomarj. The fleet consists of six war galleys, one of which is stationed continually at both Hardby and Safeton, with the other four prowling the waters between. There is always a garrison of approximately 80 marines present in Hardby. The morale of the Marines is excellent and they are hardy fighters, skilled with cutlass, club, knife and light crossbow. A wizard and a cleric of either Pelor or St. Cuthbert also support each war galley while on patrol.

The mainstay of the garrison is 300 men from the Greyhawk Mountaineers. As well as garrisoning the city, they patrol the western foothills of the Abbor-Alz. Hardby's militia makes up the balance of the garrison, numbering 150 infantry and 100 cavalry. The infantry ward the gates and walls of the city, while cavalry patrols maintain order in the outlying villages and manors. Day to day law and order in the burgh is maintained by the City Watch, based in Northend and answerable to the Justicar of Hardby. The Watch are scrupulous in their maintenance of the laws of the city and corruption is surprisingly rare.

Although the Marines are fiercely loyal to their commander Wilbrem Carister and all of the Greyhawk men profess their love of their home city, the despotrix and the Gynarchy are held in high esteem among Hardby's garrison. The Militia and Watch are even more loyal to the despotrix. The Directing Oligarchy has urged Carister to do more to rectify the divided loyalties of his men, but—typically—the military governor has ignored such calls in favor of orc-slaying on the high seas.

Districts

Hardby lies on the eastern shore of Hard Bay, an inlet of Woolly Bay. The dark-blue waters of the harbor are deep enough for ocean-going vessels to navigate, while the seacliffs on its southern and western shores ensure a sheltered anchorage. A pair of giant statues depicting two brawling men dominates the entrance to the harbor. The statues, a heavyset, balding man in middle age and a younger, taller man, are a reminder of the violent and foolish nature of men and a symbol of the enlightened rule of the Gynarchy.

The oldest portion of the city lies between the bay and the Great Wall, a 20-foot-high stone structure strengthened by a series of square-built watchtowers. The district of Northend, also known as High Chapel, houses most of Hardby's administrative and military buildings. Hardby's waterfront bristles with wharves, piers, and jetties. Along its length lies the Dock District, a chaotic assembly of inns, taverns, and flophouses. Between the docks and the Great Wall lies Fishtown, home to myriad maritime crafts, industries, and warehouses. The portion of Hardby without the Great Wall is divided between the mercantile Trade Town and the residential Ebbfields, and is girdled by a ditch and wooden palisade.

Northend (High Chapel)

Standing on the site of Ena Norbe's original stockade, Northend is a warren of official buildings, including the Palace of the Gynarchs, the City Watch House, and the Law Courts. Hardby's garrison is largely billeted here also, with the barracks for the Hardby Marines, Greyhawk Mountaineers, and Hardby Militia all crammed into the crowded district.

Palace of the Gynarchs: Richly adorned and built in the circular, domed Suloise Classical style, the Palace of the Gynarchs stands in the center of Northend. Formerly the seat of power of the Despotrix, the palace has become a monument to Hardby's lost independence. Though Wilbrem Carister rules from the Arsenal, the granite and marble Palace still plays host to meetings of the Gynarchy. These take place in the great echoing Chamber of the First Mother, which houses the *Throne of Wood*, a minor artifact devoted to Ehlonna and the traditional seat of the despotrixes of Hardby. The Trade Council also meets in the Palace, though it has for many decades convened in an antechamber, leaving the Chamber of the First Mother as the sole domain of the gynarchs.

DM's Notes: The Gynarchy meets on the middle day of each festival week, though little other than ceremonial matters are discussed at these sessions. The real business goes on behind closed doors at secret conclaves out of sight of the agents of the Merchants' Alliance and Retep Mandel that infest the old Palace. The future of the city and resistance to the rule of Greyhawk are regularly discussed.

517 CY: The Merchants' Coup—the Hardby Merchants' Alliance subverts the militia and dockers and seizes power. The Trade Council of the Alliance becomes the ruling body of Hardby, retaining the despotrix as a figurehead.

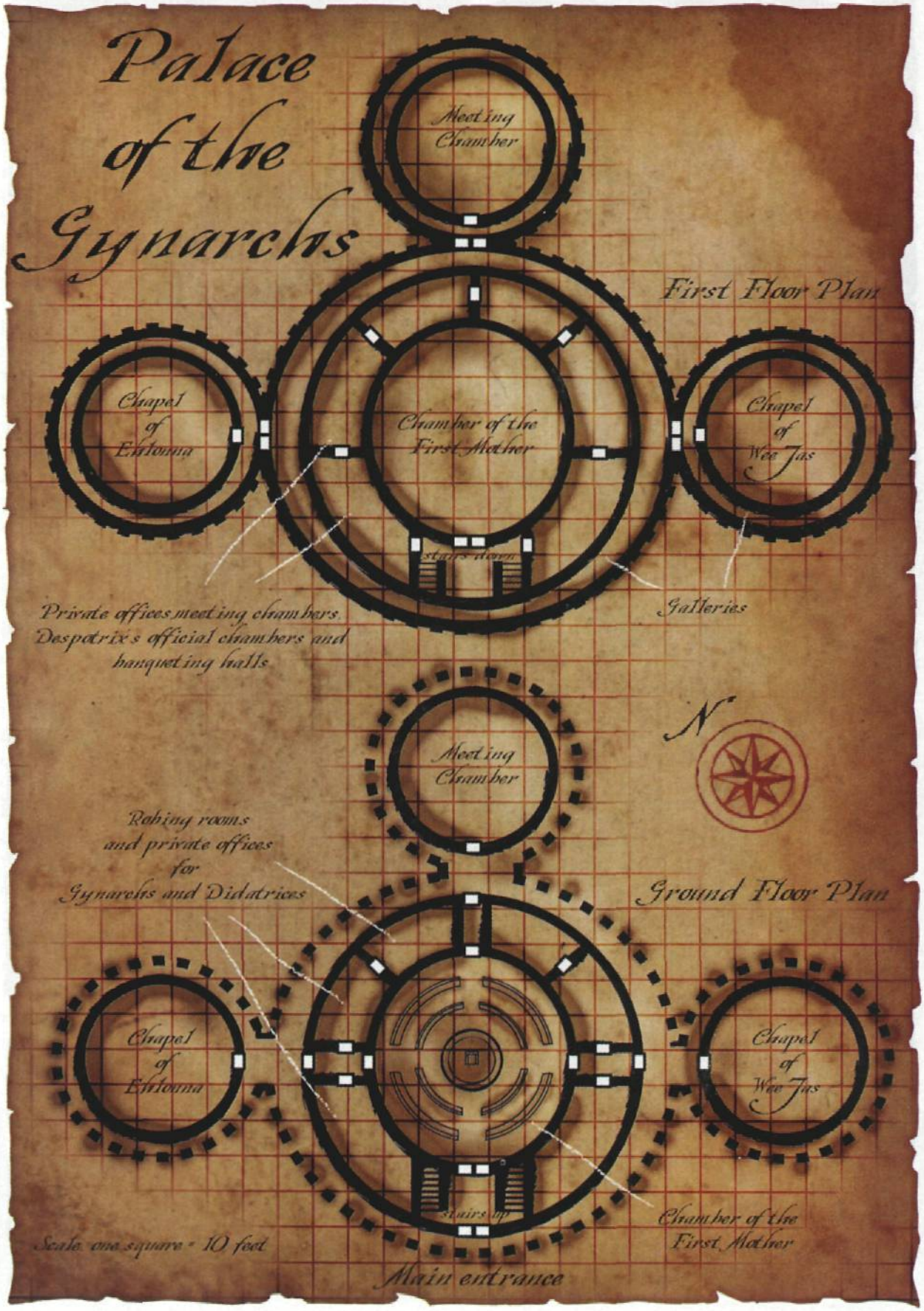
566 CY: Ilena Norbelos is elected as Despotrix of Hardby.

582 CY: After raids by savage humanoids from the Abbor-Alz, Greyhawk Mountaineers are garrisoned in Hardby. Wilbrem Carrister betrays the Trade Council into the hands of the Directing Oligarchy of Greyhawk City, in return for command of the Hardby Marines and the title of Military Governor of Hardby.

586 CY: Despotrix Ilena takes part in the Striking of the *Crook of Rao* and falls ill soon thereafter.

594 CY: The current year.

The City of Harby
To Orz
Lighthouse
The Ebbfields
Tradetown
Lighthouse
Palisade
The Great Wall
Fishtown
Dark District
River Road
Northend
Hard Bay
N
Breakwater
Statues
Lighthouse
1. Palace of the Gynarchs
2. The High Chapel
3. The Law Courts and Watch Barracks
4. The Arsenal
5. Sign of the Tarnished Idol
6. The Pilot's Office
7. The Spotted Cow Inn
8. Danigar's Pen
9. The Great Cranes
10. The Shipwrights Guildhall
11. The Bonded Barrel Ghetto
12. Taremann Norne Warehouses
13. Shop of Roban Lanerell
14. Office of the Royal Guild of Merchants of Aerdy
15. Mistress of the Coach Inn
16. Berei's Bounty
17. Order of the Throne of Wood Chapterhouse
18. Redoubt of the Shield Maiden
19. Rotanna's Menagerie
20. Temple of Osprem
21. Temple of Xerbo
22. Temple of Procan
23. Temple of Zilchus
24. Temple of St. Cuthbert
25. Temple of Lirr
26. Temple of Myrhiss
27. Temple of Norebo
28. Temple of Joramy
29. The Phoenix
30. Temple of Zodal


Palace of the Gynarchs
First Floor Plan
Meeting Chamber
Chapel of Ehlonna
Chamber of the First Mother
Chapel of Wee Jas
stairs down
Private offices meeting chambers Despatrix's official chambers and banqueting halls
Galleries
N
Meeting Chamber
Ground Floor Plan
Ruling rooms and private offices for Gynarchs and Didatrices
Chapel of Ehlonna
Chapel of Wee Jas
stairs up
Chamber of the First Mother
Scale: one square = 10 feet
Main entrance

Mandel would dearly love to infiltrate and spy upon such meetings, but he has been utterly without success in cultivating spies among the Gynarchy.

The High Chapel: The Temple of Pelor in Hardby is one of the oldest religious structures in the city. Its golden dome soars high over the rooftops of Northend, giving the temple the name it also lends to the district as a whole. The High Priestess is **Mother Storanna** (NG female human Clr9—Pelor), a woman in her late sixties, who has resided in the city for forty years and overseen the temple for the last fifteen. Under Mother Storanna's direction, the priests distribute healing, food, and alms to the poor of the city. Unusually, the temple enjoys the patronage of all factions in Hardby, largely due to Storanna's strenuous efforts to avoid involvement in the city's politics. Many of the clergy are female, though the church does not discriminate on grounds of gender.

DM's Notes: Pelor's clergy within Hardby are split between older priests, who favor the charitable, gentle doctrines of the Sun Father, and younger priests, who favor Pelor's more martial aspect. Mother Storanna is firmly in the camp of the old guard, seeking to keep the church out of the intrigues that now multiply in the city. However, her deputy, **Noranae Longland** (LG female human Clr7—Pelor), is a fervent proponent of the new doctrines. Like her cousin, Deirdre, she has been a vociferous champion of the burgeoning church of Mayaheine. As a native of the city, Noranae lacks the detachment of her superior and has already declared her support for her cousin's bid for the *Throne of Wood*.

The Law Courts and Watch Barracks: Standing opposite the Palace of the Gynarchs, the Law Courts and Watch Barracks are housed in a single massive edifice. Despite attempts by the Directing Oligarchy to impose Greyhawk's legal code upon the city, the Justicar has fiercely defended Hardby's own code of laws, formulated in its original form by Ena Norbe herself. The Sundries Court deals with petty misdemeanors and disputes, while the High Court deals with serious crimes. The Judiciary is exclusively female, and many judges are also members of the Gynarchy. Wizards and priests (also predominantly female) are employed in all but the most minor cases to determine the veracity of testimony and evidence.

Captain Kateran (LN male human Ftr6), a native of the city, commands the Watch. Kateran is a stern man who, while being loyal to the Gynarchy, fulfils his duty to the Military Governor to the best of his ability. The Law Courts also house a small temple to Wee Jas, who has been worshiped in Hardby since the city's foundation. The Stern Lady has a considerable following among members of the Judiciary.

DM's Notes: Minor crimes, such as theft, vandalism, and breach of contract are punished by sizeable fines (up to 75% of the convict's worth), confiscation of goods of equal value to the stolen property, or public service with the Militia (one day of service/10 gp value). Brawling, provided there are no fatalities, is punished with a night in prison and, in some cases, a small fine (10% of the convict's worth). While it is permitted to bear weapons within the city, drawing them can result in a heavy fine and imprisonment. Serious crimes, such as murder, manslaughter, and arson are punished by payment of a wergild (character level of the convict +1 × 100 gp), forfeiture of property, indentured servitude, or beheading. Violence against women is severely punished, with the penalty for rape being public emasculation followed by burial to the neck below the high water mark on a nearby beach, aptly named Ravishers' End.

The Arsenal: The Arsenal houses the garrison of the Greyhawk Mountaineers and the Militia. Originally built to house only the Militia, the walled compound has expanded to fill an entire city block. The Arsenal stands on the waterfront, close to the Great Wall and overlooking a small naval dock, where at least one Marine galley is always moored. The dock can accommodate the entire fleet, if need be, with facilities for minor repairs and refitting. Wilbrem Carister at least nominally rules Hardby from his spartan offices in the Arsenal. Day to day governance, however, is in the hands of Retep Mandel. Mandel is as unpopular with the Marines as he is elsewhere in Hardby. His orders are followed, however, albeit reluctantly at times.

DM's Notes: Much to Mandel's delight, Carister spends much of his time either on the high seas or planning his next patrol. This leaves Mandel almost complete freedom to act to secure Greyhawk's interests in Hardby. Carister is no fool, however, and has an agent in the form of **Galvin Solgred** (N male human Rog5), one of Mandel's aides, to make sure that Greyhawk's interests coincide with his own.

Rotanna's Menagerie: Tucked away down a back street close to the walls is a small menagerie owned and maintained by **Rotanna Maynem** (NG female human Ari5), one of the Gynarchs of the city. A devotee of Ehlonna, Rotanna has dedicated her life to the collection of animals and beasts of all forms, mundane and exotic. Her townhouse and its courtyard are crammed with cages and pools to house her not unsubstantial collection. Rotanna is in contact with the eccentric Lord Henway of Greyhawk City and has in the past exchanged some of her more exotic specimens for items from his collection.

DM's Notes: Rotanna is wealthy enough to occasionally hire intrepid souls to capture creatures, usually from the Abbor-Alz, Bright Desert, Gnarly, and Suss Forests. She pays well for what is dangerous work. Slaying mon-

The Highchapel District

sters is one thing. Bringing them (and oneself) back alive is another.

Dock District

A broad, cobbled quay runs the length of the waterfront, which is usually forested with the masts of merchantmen of many nations. The cornerstone of Hardby's economy has been the transit trade in goods between the states around the shores of Relmor Bay and the Azure Sea and the lands of the central Flanaess. Though the Scarlet Brotherhood's blockade of the Strait of Gearnat has curtailed trade with Keoland and the Iron League, the presence of the Royal Guild of Merchants of Aerdy is looked upon as a good omen for renewed trade with Ahlissa.

A warren of boisterous sailor's taverns, inns, hostels, and other less reputable premises sprawls along the quay. The narrow streets and fetid back-alleys are dangerous after dark, and Watch patrols are frequent. Drunken brawls are common here, and the district is a hive of criminality.

The Dock District is also home to many of Hardby's half-orcs. Numbering about a thousand, many have lived in Hardby for generations—with most being of Pomarji descent. Consequently, they are more readily trusted and better treated in Hardby than their kin in Safeton, Narwell, or even Greyhawk City.

Sign of the Tarnished Idol: The Sign of the Tarnished Idol is a seedy, run-down keg-house on a back alley close to the waterfront. From the rotting straw on the floor to the makeshift tables, the place is indistinguishable from a score of other dives along the docks, except in one respect. Each midnight, **Rughra** (CE female half-orc Clr5—Camazotz), the uncouth half-orc woman who runs the place, makes all customers pay homage to a tarnished green idol set above what passes for a bar. Most customers, used to the "Midnight Service," pay it no mind so long as the ale keeps flowing. Last winter, however, a well-travelled Keolander took one look at the bat-shaped idol before fleeing the tavern in terror. His bloodless body was found two days later, high in the branches of a tree a league outside the city.

DM's Notes: The idol is devoted to Camazotz, the chaotic evil lesser bat-god of the Olman Underworld (*Domains:* chaos, evil, death, plant). Rughra has become a devotee of "Zotz" (as she calls him) and has been granted divine spells by him. It was she who dealt with the Keolander, summoning a servitor of her master to prevent him from revealing her secret. Unfortunately for Rughra, however, the man, Aherlos of Gradsul, was a Royal Explorer. His mysterious death has piqued the curiosity of his fellows in the Keoish Royal Explorer's Society.

The Pilots' Office: The lighthouse at the southern end of the docks serves as a jail for the watch, a garrison point for the militia, and the headquarters of the Pilots' Office. While the watch and the Pilots' Office share the tower itself, the militia are billeted in an adjoining barracks. The Pilots' Office not only provides pilots to guide ships into port but also inspects and applies tariffs to cargoes landed at the port. Members of the organization also hire themselves out as river pilots, helping low-keeled boats avoid the dangerous shoals of the Selintan on the journey north to Greyhawk. Although these dour and serious bureaucrats remain neutral in political matters, they exert a quiet and extensive influence in the city. The current chief pilot is a half-orc named **Corvel Yellowtusk** (LN male half-orc Exp6).

DM's Notes: The Watch cells are in the somewhat dank basement of the lighthouse and are used to hold prisoners before trial. A score of militia are posted here, manning a number of ballistae and a light catapult mounted on the roof of the barracks. The chief pilot is an efficient and honest man (though he has a fatal weakness for dwarf spirits), who studiously avoids being drawn into "political matters." He works with equal diligence, however, to maintain the power and influence of the Pilots' Office in the city. Furthermore, under his leadership, half-orcs can find easy employ with the pilots, provided they are competent and honest.

The Great Cranes: These three enormous cranes are the work of members of the Khaladuur Clan of Greysmere and the magic of several gynarchs. Built in 588 CY, these ingenious constructions allow for the rapid loading and unloading of cargo. Although they have proven popular among merchants and ship's masters, the Union of Longshoremen has denounced the cranes, saying that they are putting its members out of work.

DM's Notes: Thus far the Union's actions have been confined to protests to the Trade Council and the Pilot's Office. However, their pleas have fallen on deaf ears and now there are angry rumblings within the Union about taking more direct action against the "curse of the cranes."

The Spotted Cow Inn: This hostelry is well known in the Dock District and the city as a whole as one of the best inns in Hardby. Standing on the waterfront at the south end of the docks and conspicuous for its bovine-shaped cowskin sign, the inn is always packed to the gunwales with sailors, longshoremen, fishermen, and tanners from Fish Town. Inside, however, the place is indistinguishable from a hundred other harbor-side inns. The new owner, **Oremal Thelk** (NG male human Exp4), cannot figure out the cause of his success, but is not complaining. Thelk is only the latest in a string of proprietors, few of whom remain more than two years before selling up, despite the inn's clear profitability.

DM's Notes: Unknown to Thelk and indeed many of the previous owners, the Spotted Cow was built on the site of an old shrine to Ralishaz, the god of chance, ill luck, misfortune, and insanity. The shrine was burnt to the ground, along with the priest who tended it, more than a century and a half ago after being struck by lightning in a freak storm. The Spotted Cow was built on the site and has prospered since its opening. The same cannot be said for its

This feat first appeared in *Forgotten Realms: Lords of Darkness*, and has been included here for ease of reference.

Tattoo Magic [Item Creation]
You can create tattoos that store spells.

Prerequisite: Craft (calligraphy) or Craft (painting) skill, spellcaster level 3rd+.

Benefit: You can create single-use magic tattoos.

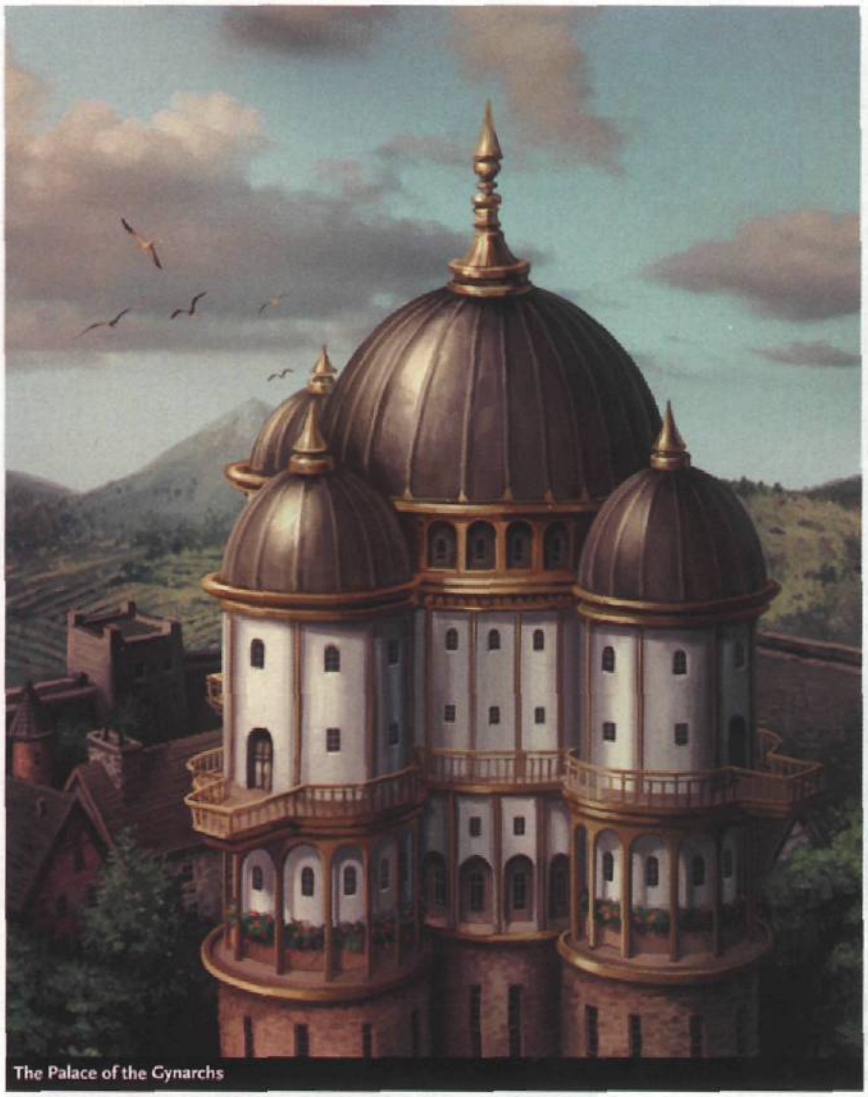
You can create a tattoo of any spell of 3rd level or lower that you know and that targets a creature or creatures. Creating a tattoo takes 1 hour, and it must be inked onto a creature with a corporeal body. When you create a tattoo, you set the caster level. The caster level must be sufficient to cast the spell in question and no higher than your own level. The base price of a tattoo is its spell level × its caster level × 50 gp. To create a tattoo, you must spend 1/25 of this base price in XP and use up raw materials costing half this base price.

When you create a tattoo, you make any choices that you would normally make when casting the spell. The bearer of the tattoo is the only one who can activate it and is always the target of the spell. Activating a tattoo requires the creature to touch the tattoo with either hand (the hand does not need to be empty). Activating a tattoo is a standard action that does not draw an attack of opportunity.

Any tattoo that stores a spell with a costly material component or an XP cost also carries a commensurate cost. In addition to the costs derived from the base price, you must expend the material component or pay the XP when creating the tattoo.

Normally a magic tattoo uses a magic item space on the creature's body. For example, a creature with a tattoo on one of its hands could not gain the benefits from a magic glove on that hand. Likewise, a creature with a magic tattoo on its back does not receive the benefits of a magic cloak, cape, or mantle. In effect, the magic tattoo is always the first item "worn" on that part of the body, negating the effects of all other items. A tattoo can be created that does not use a magic item space, but the base price of such a tattoo is double the normal value.

A magic tattoo can be erased with an *erase* spell as if it were magic writing. Failing to erase the tattoo does not activate it.



The Palace of the Gynarchs

owners who, without exception, have suffered a catalogue of misfortunes. While most have quickly sold up and moved on, a few have tried to tough out their bad luck only to go insane, raving about being haunted by a ghostly figure in smoldering robes.

Danigar's Pen: One of the most popular tattoo-shops on the Hardby Docks, Danigar's Pen is run by young wizard of the same name. **Danigar** (N male half-elf Wiz7) is a former apprentice to **Oscar Longland** (LG male human Wiz12), brother of Justicar Deirdre Longland. After his master was blinded and maimed at the Siege of Safeton, Danigar was forced to fend more and more for himself, hence the tattoo-shop. Danigar's Pen offers two services that his competitors cannot. The first is *erase* spells to remove the names of old sweethearts and mistakes made when Danigar is in his cups—not a rare occurrence. The second is magical tattoos that bestow good fortune upon the bearer. Danigar's new wife, an Olman woman the wizard returned with from an expedition to the Amedio Jungle in early 593 CY, pens these. Danigar's assistant is a very fat halfling called **Gormadoc** (N male halfling Rog9), a regular fixture in many of Hardby's eating establishments.

DM's Notes: Gormadoc is an agent of the Slavelords of the Pomarj, passing information about threats to his masters and on occasion arranging for those showing too much interest in the Slavelords' activities to meet with untimely ends, usually in arranged brawls. Gormadoc has grown greedy. Having wheedled his way into the local "branch" of the Greyhawk's Thieves' Guild, he has begun the dangerous game of playing the Guild off against the Slavelords, passing just enough information about one to the other to make himself a valued (and well-paid) member of both.

In his spare time, Danigar is researching the field of magical tattoos further and has recently taken an interest in the ritual markings of the Flan, both recent and ancient. Danigar's wife, **Hlozapatan** (CN female human Adp10), can indeed craft magic tattoos, which bestow different magical abilities depending on the design of the tattoo as described in the "Tattoo Magic" sidebar.

Fish Town

This district of the old town stretches along the Great Wall. Large swaths of Fish Town are given over to huge warehouses—easily enough to accommodate the volume of goods passing through the port. The area is crammed with fish and meat salters and packers, boat-wrights, net makers, rope makers, and fishermen. As a result, it reeks of fish and is populated by hordes of cats and seagulls. Cats are considered lucky here, and to harm one is to incite the ire of the locals.

Shipwright's Guildhall: The Shipwright's Guildhall is an exquisitely crafted wooden structure built, like many of the Guild's vessels, from the finest Gnarley oak. The guildmaster is **Harvan Lhoral** (N male human Exp9), a local man and master shipwright. The guild's members have the monopoly on all shipbuilding, large and small, in the city and its hinterlands. Thus, they have no small measure of power

over Hardby's economy. The city's shipwrights are known for their quality work, and they attract contracts from as far away as Greyhawk City and even Dyvers.

DM's Notes: While the guildmaster used to hold a practically permanent position on the Trade Council, Harvan has been displaced by the Grayhavian soldiers on the Council. The Guildmaster has taken this as a personal slight and is a staunch, if discrete, opponent of Greyhawk's rule in Hardby. At his direction, the Guild is moving its main yards from Fishtown to Arok's Landing, hoping to make the village a stronghold for the guild and the Merchants' Alliance. Once in a position of strength, Harvan hopes to dictate terms to the Directing Oligarchy by refusing to build or repair ships for vessels not affiliated with the Merchants' Alliance. This embargo could potentially cripple the Hardby Marines' fleet and any other Greyhavian merchant vessels using the port. How the Marines and Directing Oligarchy are likely to respond to such an act of defiance is unclear—but decisive action of some form is likely.

The Bonded Barrel Ghetto: This warren of warehouses in the center of Fish Town has been derelict for almost a decade, since its owners went bankrupt. The warehouses have become a ghetto, populated by many of Hardby's poor who cram themselves into tiny huts and shanties. These hovels are often stacked precariously on top of each other, forming a teeming indoor slum riddled with narrow, twisting crawl spaces and perilous gantries and bridges. Of late the ghetto has been terrorized by a spate of random murders and disappearances. There is widespread suspicion that the Trade Council is trying to clear the ghetto by terrorizing the squatters into leaving. Other tales speak of a huge bat-like creature that stalks the ghetto, leaving death in its wake.

DM's Notes: The murders are actually the work of **Diran Conoriel** (NE male human Rog5/Asn3), an agent of the Scarlet Brotherhood. He poses as a mad beggar with a pet rat, from which he derives his nickname—"Ratter." The insanity is not entirely part of the disguise. Trained as a Brotherhood assassin, Diran's homicidal urges have gotten the better of him, and despite stern warnings from his masters, he has resumed his murderous ways. Unbeknownst to Diran however, the Scarlet Brotherhood has dispatched a second agent, **Jerda Borav** (LE female human Mnk5), to liquidate him. Jerda hopes to do this in such a fashion as to reveal Diran as an agent of the Brotherhood and manufacture links between him and a key figure in the government of Hardby opposed to the Brotherhood's goals in an effort to engineer the enemy's downfall.

Taremann Norne Warehouses: Taremann Norne (NE male human Rog6) is a one of the wealthier men in Hardby, owning a number of large warehouses in Fishtown. Fabulously greedy and none too wise, his business and his wealth depend on being able to charge high fees for the use of his warehouses. Since the slump in trade after the Greyhawk Wars has meant that there is more warehousing than cargo, Norne has felt the pinch. He has unsuccessfully lobbied (bribed) the Trade Council to allow the conversion of some of the excess warehouses into houses or shops. Recently, he has employed a number of locals of questionable character to act as night watchmen in his premises, and there is speculation that Norne is engaging in some illicit sidelines to bolster his fortunes.

DM's Notes: Norne is indeed engaging in illicit activities, although not of the sort many suspect. His plan is far more ambitious, if typically foolhardy. Norne hopes use his new "friends" to set fires in a number of disused warehouses, including the Bonded Barrel Ghetto, in the hope that the resulting inferno destroys enough of Hardby's warehouse space to allow him to charge any price he likes. He plans to destroy some of his own less valuable premises to deflect suspicion. The fact that the fire could spread out of control and devastate the entire old town, killing many hundreds of people, especially the poor squatters and slum dwellers of Fish Town, has not even occurred to Norne. Even if it did, it would not trouble him, provided he made a profit in the end.

Tradetown

Tradetown is the center of commerce in Hardby. Lying outside the Great Wall, the quarter is crowded with all manner of merchants' and artisans' premises. The merchants occupy Blanket Street, while the artisans cluster by profession in the side alleys. This is a busy and bustling district with a wide variety of goods for sale, including exotic items from the four corners of the Flanaess.

Blanket Street Market: Blanket Street is the heart of Tradetown. The facades of the myriad shops and emporia that line the street form a pair of continuous arcades along its entire length. Under the shelter of these loggias, itinerant traders are allowed to peddle their wares on brightly colored blankets, from which the street derives its name. On any given day, the street is packed and competition between the peddlers for the best places can be fierce. The crowds suit the local thieves, who throng the area, preying on the incautious and the gullible. One of the shops along Blanket Street is owned by **Roban Lannerel** (NE female human Clr7—Earth Dragon), a dealer in gems, jewelry, and obscure *objets d'art*. A wealthy woman, she is known to sponsor expeditions into the Cairn Hills, Abbor-Alz, and Suss Forests to recover unusual items.

DM's Notes: The Trade Council levies a tax on 10% on all goods sold by foreign traders within the city, to encourage

The Dock District

traders to settle in Hardby and give the local merchants an edge over outsiders. Roban is an agent of the Slavelords and a priestess of the Earth Dragon (LE demigod of earth, weather, and hidden treasures; *Domains:* earth, evil). In 592 CY, she married one of the merchants on the Trade Council, giving her access to and influence over Council business. Roban uses her expeditions to dispose of troublesome adventurers who become too interested in the Slavelords, sending them into the wilds and arranging for bandits or humanoids to ensure they do not return. Roban has contacts with Aleeta Norbelos, and is quietly supporting the young gynarch's bid for the *Throne of Wood*.

Office of the Royal Guild of Merchants of Aerdy: In 592 CY, the Royal Guild of Merchants of Aerdy dispatched one of its factors (trade agents), **Mirlan Rinshand** (LN male human Rog10), to Hardby. Rinshand's task is apparently to pave the way for an opening of sea trade between Ahlissa and Hardby. After rapidly snapping up a fine building in the heart of Tradetown, the factor has since distinguished himself as a valued customer to Hardby's better drinking and gambling establishments. The agents that both the Trade Council and Retep Mandel have sent to shadow the Ahlissan have concluded that he is a harmless, if flamboyant, drunken fop.

DM's Notes: Rinshand, though he certainly enjoys the role of the boisterous sot, womanizer, and gambler, is in fact a sharp operator and a rising star in the Royal Guild. Using his carousing as a smokescreen, he works quietly to establish a strong Ahlissan presence in Hardby. Key to this has been forming a pact with the Merchant's Alliance. Using the promise of contracts with the Royal Guild, the Ahlissan lured the Alliance into the guild's embrace and gained the trust of their leader, Perav Hulvir. Rinshand is now subtly manipulating Hulvir, and through him the Merchants' Alliance, stoking discontent with Greyhawk through tales of the almost unimaginable wealth and power that merchants enjoy in Ahlissa.

The Phoenix: Standing on the southern edge of Tradetown, this tavern is among the most recent and most popular in the district. Over its doors is inscribed the motto: "*Here are your waters and your watering place. Drink and be whole, beyond all confusion.*" Certainly the many patrons of the Phoenix can attest to the relaxing atmosphere of the inn. The staff is friendly, the ale refreshing and calming, and the banter humorous and good-natured. Brawls and arguments are unheard of. Quite how the barkeep, an Onnwalon exile named **Pirraen Vhar** (NG female human Sor5) manages this small miracle in a city renowned for its bar-room brawls is unknown, though many suspect that Vhar is some form of enchantress.

DM's Notes: Vhar specializes in enchantments and mind-effecting magic. She rarely puts these to use, however, except to diffuse potential trouble between her customers. The quality of the ale she brews is a testament to

her skills a brewer, herbalist, and cellar-keeper. A native of Onnwal's Storm Coast, Vhar arrived in Hardby in 586 CY, and set up the Phoenix soon after. As the name of the tavern suggests, she supports the resurgent Free State of Onnwal in its war against the Scarlet Brotherhood. She is reluctant to speak of her experiences during the Brotherhood occupation, however, and actively, if discretely, avoids other Onnwalon exiles and travelers.

The Ebbfields

This district was originally the province of Hardby's moneyed classes, who built walled estates and villas outside the Great Wall to escape the crowding and stench of the Old Town. Later, as the population of the city grew, middle-ranking artisans and craftsmen spilled into the Ebbfields, building their half-timbered houses to the east of the old stone-built villas. In recent years, pressure for living space inside the Great Wall has been so great that even the poorest laborers have been forced out into ramshackle cottages and huts on the eastern verges of town. The older parts of the Ebbfields are very pleasant with broad, well-paved, leafy streets and even the more down-at-heel parts nowhere approach the squalor of similar districts in Greyhawk City.

Mistress of the Coach Inn: The Mistress of the Coach is widely considered the best inn in the Ebbfields, if not in the entire city. It caters to an exclusive clientele—high-ranking local officials, members of the Gynarchy, military officers, and wealthy priests, merchants, and adventurers. Set around four sides of a courtyard, the building was once the townhouse of a rich merchant, and it retains much of its original extravagant ornamentation. The Mistress is very expensive, and formal dress is a prerequisite for entry. However, the rooms are extremely luxurious, the food sumptuous and exotic, and the wine cellar without compare in the city.

DM's Notes: The Mistress of the Coach is the place to see and be seen among the movers and shakers of Hardby. Rumors and whispers about the political maneuverings of the various factions in the city can be heard in the private snugs and withdrawing rooms of the inn. The formal dress code is enforced by a half-dozen human ex-mercenaries, and functional armor and weapons are strictly forbidden. Mirlan Rinshand, who keeps a suite of rooms here, is a regular feature in the gambling salon.

Berei's Bounty: In contrast to the ostentation of the Mistress of the Coach, Berei's Bounty is a plain, sturdy, low-priced inn in the east of the Ebbfields. Berei's Bounty welcomes all comers, even those with no money to pay for rooms, who may spend the night on the hard-packed earthen floor of the common room. The inn is exceptionally welcoming and homey thanks to the efforts of the proprietor, **Shilauna Merylann** (NG female human Clr6—Berei), a priestess of Berei. At her direction, the walls of the common room are decked with sheaves of freshly cut wheat every autumn, while a shrine to the Hearth Mother stands above the ornately carved granite mantel of the inn's fireplace.

DM's Notes: The welcoming atmosphere and inexpensive prices make Berei's Bounty a popular inn with adventurers. Tales and rumors of events and strange goings on from the Gnarley, Cairn Hills, Abbor-Alz, and the Bright Lands are common currency here.

Order of the Throne of Wood Chapterhouse: This well-appointed walled estate sprawls in the shadow of the Great Wall. The Order of the Throne of Wood is a female-only society dedicated to furthering the cause of womankind in the Flanaess as a whole and Hardby in particular. Founded early in Hardby's history, the Order was originally called the *Yevas Yal'Akoshen* (Ancient Suloise: "Order of True Womanhood"). The current, less politically provocative name was adopted after the Merchants' Coup. The Order counts most, if not all, of the Gynarchy among its members, as well as many of Hardby's female judges, clergy, mages, and warriors. The Order has a fairly loose and informal structure, though members are bound to render what aid they can to other members and to strive for the rights of the "superior sex." Nominally devoted to Ehlonna, the Order also includes many followers of Wee Jas (especially among magically inclined members) and Mayaheine.

DM's Notes: Membership is by invitation only, but is not restricted to natives of Hardby. Any woman whose actions are deemed to further the cause of womankind may be asked to join. The power struggle in the Gynarchy is reflected in the Order. The Ehlonnan faction, previously pre-eminent, has been in decline since the defection of its leader, Deirdre Longland, to the group devoted to Mayaheine. Under her leadership, the Shield Maidens have gone from strength to strength. Meanwhile, the Coven of the Stern Lady—followers of Wee Jas—has lent their support to Aleeta Norbelos. The first political skirmishes of the battle to succeed Despotrix Ilena are already being fought within the walls of the Order's Chapterhouse.

Redoubt of the Shield Maiden: After her conversion during the Greyhawk Wars, Deirdre Longland donated a townhouse belonging to her family to the Shield Maiden. A small chapel was quickly consecrated on the grounds. However, the rapid burgeoning of the faith in Hardby and generous donations from the Gynarchs have allowed the clergy to lay plans for a grand cathedral to Mayaheine on the site, set to rival the High Chapel in its grandeur. Construction has already begun, but is likely to take many years to complete.

DM's Notes: Work on the cathedral continues apace, though it has recently been hit by a spate of accidents and mishaps. Stone blocks have mysteriously slipped their harnesses and crushed several workmen. The granite blocks hewn and hauled from the Abbor-Alz have proven brittle and apt to shatter and crumble under the hands of the masons. Rumors are beginning to circulate that the cathedral, or the ground upon which it stands, is cursed, and only the forceful character of **Kateranna Yoreill** (LG female human Clr6—Mayaheine), the high-priestess of Mayaheine, has prevented several master masons from abandoning the site altogether. Kateranna knows that unless the cause of the trouble is found soon, her grand project is doomed to failure.

"Temple of Zodal": Though adorned with a crude symbol of the god of mercy, hope, and benevolence, this now derelict building is not actually consecrated to Zodal. The woman who dwelt here posed as a priest of the Gray Son, dispensing healing and herbal salves and remedies. In the spring of 593 CY, one of her concoctions led to the poisoning of several members of a local family. The woman, **Ezoela** (CG female human Com4) (or "Zoe," as she was more commonly known), fled her house before a mob of angry locals ransacked the place. Rumors are rife that Ezoela is an agent of the Scarlet Brotherhood or a cultist of Incabulos, Syrul, or some other evil deity. A price of 100 gp has been placed on her head.

DM's Note: Despite the wild tales, the unfortunate Ezoela is not a cultist or an assassin. She practiced her quackery with good intentions, trying to help the local people and make a living at the same time. Unfortunately, her knowledge of herbs did not match her skill at deception, and she accidentally added hemlock to an herbal remedy, resulting in the poisonings. Ezoela fled for her life and is currently hiding in the Bonded Barrel Ghetto, trying to devise a way to flee the city altogether and start afresh elsewhere.

Hardby's Hinterland

While endless plots abound in the City of the Scorned, adventure aplenty awaits brave explorers within hours of the city gates.

Despotrix's Estate: Despotrix Ilena's private manor lies in the midst of the rolling countryside northeast of Hardby. It is here that the real policies of the Gynarchy are decided. As she has grown frailer in recent years, the despotrix has spent more time cloistered in her manor house. She now leaves only to attend assemblies of the Gynarchy in Hardby or to stir up trouble at the annual meeting of the Greyhawk Council of Mayors and Manorial Lords. Increasingly, her didatrix, **Javka Gerneskir** (NG female human, Rog3/Clr3—Lirr), deals with the despotrix's public business and appointments.

DM's Notes: Ilena knows she is dying, but foresees the damage that the struggle for succession will do to the Gynarchy. She favors her granddaughter for her staunchly anti-Greyhawk stance, but feels Aleeta is too young for the role of despotrix. So Ilena is determined to cling to life for a few more years in the hope that Aleeta learns some wisdom in the meantime. To this end, the despotrix has been in secret but frequent communication with Rary the Traitor. Javka, though a loyal servant to her mistress, is unaware of these contacts. For her part, Javka has assumed extraordinary power for a didatrix, effectively becoming the despotrix's proxy in day to day matters. This has earned the young woman no small number of enemies, including Aleeta, who regards Javka as grasping upstart.

Hardfield Manor: Lying a few miles north of the city, this country estate has been in the hands of the Norbelos Family since they bought it from its previous master, one Zagig Yragerne. It is widely whispered that some of the eccentricity of the Yragerne line somehow took hold of the new occupants. The gynarchs of Hardfield have been without exception reclusive, showing no interest in the politics of the city and only rarely deigning to leave their retreat to attend assemblies of the Gynarchy. The current Lady of Hardfield is **Bridara Norbelos** (N female human Wiz9), the oldest living gynarch.

DM's Notes: Given her age, Bridara has been suggested as a compromise candidate for the *Throne of Wood* when Despotrix Ilena finally dies. So far, however, she has refused to meet with the messengers sent to her by the other gynarchs. In the spring, she sent her didatrix to the Palace in her stead to state that she had no intention of ascending to the *Throne of Wood*. As the struggle between Deirdre and Aleeta grows more polarized, however, the pressure on Bridara to emerge from her seclusion and prevent a schism in the Gynarchy only increases.

Orz: This small fishing village of 300 souls lies several leagues east of Hardby on the Storm Keep road. It was founded in 542 CY by a Naelax prince and his children, who arrived in Hardby from Ahlissa. Renouncing all titles in their homeland, they renamed themselves the House of Orz (the Old Oeridian word for "humble"), and set about building a new life and a new town. Since then, Orz has grown into a prosperous fishing village. The settlement is noteworthy for two things—the ingenious Orz Fishing Crossbow that the fishermen of the village use (see sidebar), and the Orz Auroras, apparently harmless and non-magical lights that appear in the skies over the town at least once a week.

DM's Notes: Shalmarra, the current Lady of Orz (LN female human Ari5), is determined to bury the reason her grandfather, Prince Ivendrenn Naelax, fled his ancestral lands near Benkend. Mirlan Rinshand's curiosity has been piqued by her obviously Ahlissan heritage, however, and the factor has begun quietly digging about in the House of Orz's past in the hope of finding something profitable, either financially or politically.

Arok's Landing: Founded by Arok the Foamborne, a follower of Osprem who was washed ashore here by a freak storm, this village boasts three tanneries and a large shipyard, which builds both warships and merchantmen. In the past two years, Arok's Landing has become something of a boom-town, with artisans and craftsmen flocking here, nearly doubling the population to nigh 600. The village mayor is **Nawenda Foamborne** (CN female human Clr6—Procan), a boisterous and tempestuous priestess notorious for "blessing" every new ship built in the town by sleeping with her lover aboard it before it is launched.

DM's Notes: The real power in Arok's Landing is the Shipwright's Guild, and by extension, the Merchants' Alliance. The Alliance has begun to move its operations here, out from under the watchful eyes of the Hardby garrison and its spies. Perav Hulvir hopes that by concentrating all of Hardby's essential industry in a village utterly loyal to the Alliance, he will soon be able dictate terms to the Military Governor and the Gynarchy. Moreover, he has quietly begun training a Guild Militia to protect the shipyards from orcish marauders, or so he says. In fact, they are the seed of what Hulvir sees as a private army.

Megas Landing: This tiny fishing village of 180 residents lies about four leagues southeast of Hardby. At first glance, it is entirely unremarkable. However, anyone lingering in the place begins to notice something odd. The village and its houses are immaculately maintained, without a slate out of place, while the natives seem to be remarkably organized and close knit. The fishing boats all set off and return at the same time. People rise and retire to bed precisely at dawn and dusk. Although the village seems strange, its orderly nature has attracted a number of new inhabitants to Megas Landing. Most were passing through, but then decided they liked the way of life so much they settled here permanently, slotting effortlessly into the community.

DM's Notes: In spring 591 CY, a wooden box full of strange carved jade insects washed up close to the village. What the villagers thought was a fortune in gems is in fact a nest of overseers, mind-controlling insects created by the Scarlet Brotherhood, disguised as precious stones (see the *Living Greyhawk Journal* in *Dungeon* #106 for more about overseers). The overseers quickly began to take control of the villagers, but as more and more people came under their influence, the creatures began to form an independent Hive Mind. The Hive is no longer under the control of the Scarlet Sign, as the Scarlet Brotherhood agent dispatched to retrieve the overseers discovered when he fell victim to its mental control. The Hive is content to control Megas Landing for now, absorbing only those strangers who begin asking too many questions, but it is only a matter of time before it begins expanding its reach.

Orz Fishing Crossbow: Ranged exotic weapon; Cost 75 gp; Damage 1d8/19–20/x2; Range increment 80 ft./40 ft. underwater; Weight 20 lb. Piercing.

This modified light crossbow can fire a barbed bolt in the air and underwater. If the barbed bolt strikes a fleshy target, a DC 10 Heal check is required to remove it without inflicting a further 1d4 damage. A thin fishing line can be tied to the bolt, which, if yanked out of a victim, inflicts a further 1d4 points of damage.

Minaryn Castle: Some miles out in the Hardby countryside sits the imposing Minaryn Castle, home to **Messalina** (LN female human Wiz15), a Throne Knight who serves as magical advisor to Despotrix Ilena. The dark-haired, attractive woman trained at Greyhawk's University of Magical Arts, but soon fell out of favor with that august body after a particularly heated philosophical argument with its principal, Kieren Jalucian, forced her to relocate to her family's ancestral castle outside Hardby.

Unpopular with the Gynarchs, Messalina spends most of her days ensconced in her demesne, communicating with Ilena via messenger or magical means in an attempt to keep her influence secret from the prying eyes of Hardby's numerous factions. The despotrix considers Messalina's expertise superior to her own on matters arcane, and defaults to her advisor's position on a number of important magical issues.

Messalina frequently hires adventurers on missions of diplomacy and exploration into the foreboding wastes of the Bright Desert, an area with which the wizard enjoys great familiarity.

DM's Notes: Despite her heartfelt devotion to Despotrix Ilena, Messalina is first and foremost a servant of Rary the Traitor, with whom she adventured during her time the city of Greyhawk 20 years ago. Rary not only saved her life on numerous occasions, but also instructed her on the intricacies of countless magical secrets. Rumors of Rary's recent trafficking with fiends fill her with apprehension, but she fondly remembers the peerlessly intelligent, soft-spoken archmage of years gone by and assumes that his activities in the Bright Desert will come to an altruistic end.

At Rary's behest, Messalina has taken Aleeta Norbelos as her magical pupil, hoping to craft the impulsive youth into a malleable future leader of Hardby who eventually will be used by Rary as a weapon against his numerous enemies in Greyhawk.

Personalities of Hardby

People form the heart of Hardby's politics, problems, and perils. The following five NPCs are important to campaigns set in the City of the Scorned.

Ilena Norbelos, Despotrix of Hardby, Female Human Wiz13: CR 13; Medium humanoid (human); HD 13d4–12; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6–2, quarterstaff); Full Atk +4/–1 melee (1d6–2, quarterstaff); SA spells; SQ raven familiar; AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 6, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 19, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills: Appraise +7, Bluff +14, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Gather Information +13, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +22.

Feats: Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Forge Ring, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Negotiator, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (divination).

Languages: Common, Aquan, Draconic, Elven.

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/5/5/3/2/1; save DC 14 + spell level); 0—*daze, detect magic*, light, read magic*; 1st—*burning hands, charm person, color spray, magic missile, sleep*; 2nd—*bear's endurance, bull's strength, detect thoughts*, invisibility, protection from arrows*; 3rd—*blink, dispel magic, hold person, lightning bolt, magic circle against evil*; 4th—*detect scrying*, Evard's black tentacles, magic missile* (maximized), *polymorph, scrying**; 5th—*dimension door* (silent), *teleport, wall of force*; 6th—*chain lightning, lightning bolt* (maximized); 7th—*prismatic spray*.

*Divination Spell: These spells have a save DC 15 + spell level.

Possessions: Bracers of armor +4, circlet of persuasion, ring of protection +3.

The white-haired Despotrix of Hardby is frail beyond her 64 years. Though her vivid blue eyes have lost none of their piercing intelligence, her already spare frame has grown noticeably thinner in the last several years. While in private she is often too weak to walk, Ilena fortifies herself with magic for public engagements, which she carries off with all of her considerable poise and charm. The strain of these appearances often leaves the despotrix bedridden for weeks afterward, however, and they have become increasingly rare.

Although her strength has ebbed away ever since her participation in the Striking of the *Crook of Rao* (at the urging of the archmage Tenser), Ilena's mind remains as sharp as ever. She has a prodigious memory as well as a wicked, sardonic wit that belies her outwardly reserved demeanor. Ilena commands considerable respect both from the people of Hardby (with the exception of the leaders of the Merchants' Alliance) and from the rulers of neighboring realms. Like her granddaughter, Ilena hates Greyhawk's Directing Oligarchy for enslaving her city, and she uses her position on the Greyhawk Council of Mayors and Manorial Lords to unite the lords of Greyhawk's outlying fiefs against the Oligarchs. Though once little in Hardby escaped her attention, the despotrix knows nothing of the dangerous alliances Aleeta has formed, and would be profoundly shocked if she did.

Javka Gerneskir, Didatrix to Despotrix Ilena, Female Human Clr3—Lirr/Rog3: CR 6; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+3d6+12; hp 41; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+2/18–20, masterwork rapier); SA sneak attack +2d6, spells, turn undead; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +5, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +7, Escape Artist +9, Forgery +7, Gather Information +3, Hide +5, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +9, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +4, Use Magic Device +7.

Feats: Endurance, Run, Skill Focus (Forgery), Two-Weapon Fighting.

Languages: Common, Gnome.

Spells Prepared (4/2+1/1+1; save DC 10 + spell level); 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect poison, mending*; 1st—*command* (2), *longstrider**; 2nd—*locate object *, silence*.

*Domain Spell. *Domains:* Magic (use magic items as a 1st-level wizard), Travel (*freedom of movement* up to 3 rounds/day; Survival is a class skill).

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, *vest of escape*.

A short, solidly built woman of 27 years, Javka has dark, wavy hair, olive skin, and brilliant blue eyes. As the despotrix's strength has waned, Javka's power has waxed. She controls access to Ilena and deals with more and more of her mistress' business in an effort to preserve the despotrix's failing strength. Although she realizes that she is the power behind the *Throne of Wood*, Javka has no personal ambitions to occupy that seat, considering herself merely a servant of the despotrix. That said, her own judgment rather than Ilena's has increasingly guided her actions.

Javka has a very strong sense of duty and lives to serve the despotrix and the Gynarchy. She is an able administrator, capable of flexible and imaginative solutions to problems. In her private moments, she composes fine sonnets and is well disposed toward fellow poets. Though she shares many of her mistress' views, Javka is unaware of Ilena's magical communications with Rary, being instead an ally of the archmage Tenser, passing on news about the Bright Lands to him. Javka's power has won her many enemies in Hardby. Though Javka respects Ilena's wishes with regard to the succession, the didatrix has no love for Aleeta. Javka's determination to follow her mistress' wishes means that Deirdre Longland hasn't gained any favors either. As a result, Javka finds herself resented by both main contenders for the *Throne of Wood*, a situation she accepts as a consequence of her loyalty to her mistress.

Aleeta Norbelos, Gynarch of Hardby, Female Human, Wiz7: CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d4; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (1d4–2/19–20, dagger); SA spells; SQ cat familiar; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 7, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Gather Information +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +13, Move Silently +4, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +13.

Feats: Brew Potion, Leadership, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment), Still Spell.

Languages: Common, Elven, Giant, Infernal.

Spells Prepared (4/5/4/3/1; save DC 13 + spell level); 0—*daze, detect magic, light, read magic;* 1st—*alter self, charm person, expeditious retreat, magic missile, sleep;* 2nd—*detect thoughts, invisibility, levitate, protection from arrows;* 3rd—*charm person* (still and silent), *dispel magic, lightning bolt;* 4th—*scrying.*

*Enchantment spell; save DC 14 + spell level.

Possessions: Brooch of shielding (can absorb 39 points of *magic missile* damage), *ring of mind shielding.*

Aleeta is a slender, attractive woman of 24 summers who, with her long, straight black hair and piercing blue eyes, is said to bear striking resemblance to her grandmother in her youth. The resemblance goes far deeper than just looks. Like Ilena, Aleeta combines keen intelligence with magnetic charm. The gynarch's love for Hardby has fostered a fierce hatred of Greyhawk. Unlike Ilena however, Aleeta does not have the wisdom of age to temper her passion. For Aleeta, Greyhawk embodies all the violent, coercive, masculine qualities that the Gynarchy was founded to oppose. Its usurpation of power violated Hardby and shamed the Gynarchy. She is determined to inflict the same humiliation on the Gem of the Flanaess and dreams of dealing with those that have "raped" her city in the traditional manner, starting with the Directing Oligarchy.

Driven by ambition, she became a judge of the Law Courts at the age of 20. Ambition too led her to ally with the Slavelords of the Pomarj. In return for spying on the movements of the Hardby Marines, Aleeta has secured the clandestine aid of the Slavers in her bid for the *Throne of Wood*. Though she does not support slavery, she considers the Slavelords friends because they are enemies of Greyhawk. Aleeta despises Deirdre Longland for her willingness to cooperate with the "occupiers," especially Wilbrem Carister, whom she hates almost as much as Greyhawk's Mayor Nerof Gasgal.

Deirdre Longland, Gynarch and Justicar of Hardby, Female Human, Ftr8/Cav4: CR 12; Medium humanoid (human); HD 12d10+24; hp 100; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +12; Grp +16; Atk +20 melee (1d10+8/19–20, +2 *bastard sword*) or +18 melee (1d8+5/×3, +1 *lance*); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d10+8/19–20, +2 *bastard sword*) or +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+5/×3, +1 *lance*); SA deadly charge 2/day, mounted weapon bonus (lance and sword +1); SQ burst of speed, courtly knowledge, Ride bonus +4, *special mount*; AL LG; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Courtly Knowledge (Ex): Deirdre gains a +4 competence bonus on Knowledge (nobility and royalty) checks.

Deadly Charge (Ex): When mounted and using the charge action, Deirdre deals triple damage with a melee weapon or quadruple damage with a lance. A deadly charge must be declared before making an attack roll. This ability does not stack with the benefit of the Spirited Charge feat.

Mounted Weapon Bonus (Ex): Deirdre gains a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls made using a lance or sword while mounted.

Burst of Speed (Ex): Deirdre can urge her mount to greater than normal speed when charging. This ability doubles the maximum distance the mount can travel when making a charge, up to four times its speed. This ability can be used once per day without penalty to the mount. Each additional use of the ability in a single day requires the mount to make a DC 20 Will save immediately after the conclusion of the charge; failure results in the mount taking 2d6 points of damage.

Skills: Diplomacy +2, Handle Animal +17, Jump +11, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +13, Ride +25, Swim –1.

Feats: Animal Affinity, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Leadership, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus (lance), Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Languages: Common, Auran.

Possessions: Yevaran (+2 *orc bane bastard sword*), +1 *lance,* +2 *breastplate,* +1 *mithral arrow catching heavy shield.*

A muscular, heavily-built woman of 34, Deirdre's freckled, tanned complexion and sun-bleached light brown hair speak of an active outdoor life. There is a steely hardness in her green eyes, the legacy of the grim sights they have seen on many a battlefield.

In her younger days, Deirdre and her mage brother Oscar gained notoriety for slaying the Szek of Safeton in revenge for his abduction and murder of their grandmother. Deirdre was elevated to the Gynarchy and appointed Justicar in 581 CY for her role in defeating a Pomarji host in the Welkwood. She and Oscar fought at the Siege of Safeton during the Greyhawk Wars, during which Oscar was maimed and blinded. Once a worshiper of Ehlonna, the refusal of Celene to take up arms against Turrosh Mak led to Deirdre's conver-

sion to Mayaheine's nascent cult. Since then she has been a passionate champion of the Shield Maiden's church and of the need to stand united against the hordes of the Pomarj and the Bright Lands, even at the cost of surrendering sovereignty to Greyhawk.

Outspoken and forceful, Deirdre is an able commander on the field of battle. However, these same qualities make her ill-suited to the more subtle cut and thrust of the political arena. Nonetheless, Deirdre has gained a large measure of support from the Church of Mayaheine and the more militant Gynarchs by evoking the memory of Jik Jonnosh, the great warrior despotrix of old. Deirdre bears the blade *Yevaran* (Ancient Suloise: Law's Wrath), forged by Oscar after the Wars as his vengeance on the orcs of the Pomarj.

Wilbrem Carister, Military Governor and Captain of the Hardby Marines, male human, Ftr9: CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 9d10+27; hp 85; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grp +14; Atk +17 melee (1d10+8/17–20, *+1 bastard sword*); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d10+8/17–20, *+1 bastard sword*); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 15, Wis 9, Cha 15.

Skills: Climb +17, Jump +17, Profession (sailor) +11, Swim +17, Use Magic Device +11.

Feats: Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Bull Rush, Leadership, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Languages: Common, Aquan, Elven

Possessions: +1 bastard sword, +2 leather armor, heavy steel shield, *gauntlets of ogre power, wand of magic missile* (32 charges, caster level 5), *wand of cure light wounds* (18 charges).

Wilbrem Carister cuts a striking figure: barrel chested, heavily tattooed, and completely bald, with a long gray beard and a wicked, gap-toothed grin. Now nearly 53, he is beginning to feel the encroachment of age—but is fiercely determined to see it off just as he has all his other foes.

A marine since he was old enough to grow whiskers, Wilbrem boasts about having visited every port in the Flanaess, and his broad knowledge of foreign parts seems to support this. An open, honest man at heart, he hated the mendacious politics of the old Trade Council, and feels no guilt for betraying his former colleagues. A stern, gruff but generous commander, he is loved by his men, whom he leads with almost reckless abandon. Wilbrem relishes orcslaying far more than the exercise of power. He despises Retep Mandel, but so long as the "viperous little sneak" doesn't interfere with military matters or get designs above his station, Wilbrem is content to put up with him. Carister also has considerable respect for Deirdre Longland, but otherwise has proved impervious to the subtle wiles of the Gynarchy, preferring a succession of cheerful bawdy-house wenches to the stern and manipulative matrons of Hardby. Wilbrem is never without his pet parrot, named either Albrecht or Erule, depending on Carister's whim. The bird is in fact a *baleful polymorphed* fomorian giant with the mind of a parrot but a distinctly unparrotly fondness for raw steak.

Retep Mandel, Chief Secretary to the Military Governor, male human, Rog5/Asn4: CR 9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 9d6+9; hp 47; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +13 melee (1d4+2/19–20, *+1 returning dagger*) or +13 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, *+1 returning dagger*); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d4+2/19–20, *+1 returning dagger*) or +13/+8 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, *+1 returning daggers*); SA death attack, sneak attack 5d6, spells; SQ evasion, poison use, trapfinding, trap sense +1, improved uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +3 (+5 against poison), Ref +12, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +14, Decipher Script +11, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +14 (+16 acting), Escape Artist +16, Forgery +11, Hide +16, Intimidate +16, Jump +3, Move Silently +16, Profession (apothecary) +3, Tumble +16, Sense Motive +5, Spot +12, Use Rope +4 (+6 bindings).

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Quickdraw, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger).

Languages: Common, Aquan, Goblin, Halfling.

Spells Known (4/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 1st—*disguise self, detect poison, sleep, true strike;* 2nd—*cat's grace, invisibility, undetectable alignment.*

Possessions: Two *+1 returning daggers* (named "Panic" and "Terror"), studded leather armor, 4 doses giant wasp poison.

Retep Mandel is a short, narrow-faced man of 34. While in public he takes great pains to appear as a nondescript scribe, in private his unnerving stillness and cold, black eyes leave no doubt that he is a powerful and dangerous man. More than one person has observed that there is something of the night about him, but always in whispers well out of his earshot.

A member of Greyhawk Assassin's Guild, Retep's total loyalty to Greyhawk was rewarded when he was dispatched by the oligarchs to root out sedition in Hardby. Retep has taken to the task with relish. A meticulous and calculating man, he is content to wait patiently until his quarry shows a weakness and then strike with lethal speed. Utterly without feeling, passion, or mercy, he kills simply because it is what he is skilled at. Retep is well aware that the gynarchs are plotting against him and he patiently waits for the pretext he needs to arrest the entire Gynarchy for treason. The Merchants' Alliance proved easier to infiltrate, and Retep

knows of Perav Hulvir's plans in Arok's Landing. Mandel is currently giving the guildmaster plenty of rope with which to hang himself. An expert with poisons and sera of all kinds, Retep spends his few private hours experimenting with new combinations of toxins. His prized possessions are his twin daggers, *Panic* and *Terror*.

Mirlan Rinshand, Factor of the Royal Guild of Merchants of Aerdy, male human, Rog10: CR 10; Medium humanoid (human); HD 10d6; hp 44; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +13 melee (1d6+2/18–20, +2 *rapier*); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+2/18–20, +2 *rapier*); SA sneak attack +5d6; SQ evasion, improved uncanny dodge, slippery mind, trapfinding, trap sense +3; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills: Balance +17, Bluff +16, Decipher Script +15, Diplomacy +20, Disguise +16 (+18 acting), Forgery +15, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +18, Jump +2, Listen +14, Knowledge (local) +15, Tumble +15, Sense Motive +16, Spot +14.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Languages: Common, Elven, Gnome, Halfling.

Possessions: +2 *rapier*, +2 *glamered studded leather armor, amulet of natural armor* +1, five *potions of neutralize poison*.

A portly man of 28, Mirlan Rinshand is of nearly pure Oeridian descent, with a deep olive complexion, fashionably curled black hair, and a mischievous glint in his gray eyes. Handsome and vain, he is always attired in the latest fashions from Ahlissa, which usually involve unending reams of brocade and cloth of gold.

A native of Kalstrand, Mirlan is one of a generation of fiercely ambitious young Ahlissan merchants who see the rise of Overking Xavener as an opportunity to win vast fortunes for themselves. He has been entrusted with the task of wresting Hardby from Greyhawk's grasp and establishing the port as Ahlissa's gateway to the central Flanaess. Though Mirlan certainly enjoys carousing, he never allows it to cloud his judgement and keeps a stock of *potions of neutralize poison* on hand to negate the copious amounts of alcohol he consumes. When in playboy mode, everyone is his "good and dear friend" and there is much slapping of backs, quaffing of wine and flirting with attractive young ladies. Beneath this mask however, burns an intense desire to succeed and serve his homeland, his guild, and his own ambition. Nonetheless, Mirlan is not a totally heartless man, and he takes no pleasure in manipulating his drinking partners. Betrayal for him is never personal, but merely business. Mirlan is aware of Retep Mandel's ties to the Greyhawk Assassin's Guild and is quietly searching for a means to rid himself of Mandel's troublesome presence.

Rumors and Whispers

- Agents of Rary the Traitor are infiltrating the city. Groups of Bakluni have been meeting in dockside taverns and a strange metal horse was seen on the Orz road. (False)

- A band of mercenaries from Dyvers has recently taken up residence in Arok's Landing. While keeping a low profile, they were seen training a group of longshoremen to shoot longbows in a nearby copse early one morning. (True)

- The half-orcs in Hardby are all spies for Turrosh Mak. (False, though Pomarji half-orc spies can use the native population as cover for their activities.)

- A ship with yellow sails was spotted by a Marine patrol near the mouth of the Selintan. It failed to heave to when ordered and vanished in a squall. Have the dreaded Slavelords arisen once more? (True)

- A creature from Rotanna's Menagerie is causing the deaths in Fishtown. Rotanna, who keeps all manner of strange animals in her townhouse in Northend, denies the charge—but nothing is true until it's denied. (False)

- A dwarf claiming to be of the Ironforge Clan of Irongate is recruiting for an expedition to reclaim the lost port of Zarak and the legendary Mines of Azak-Zil. (True and false—the dwarf is recruiting, but is not a member of Clan Ironforge, and is instead trying to steal the Ironforge claim to the haunted mines.)

- Orcish pirates have become more organized in recent months. Some of the Marines say that the orcs have a new leader directing their attacks. (True)

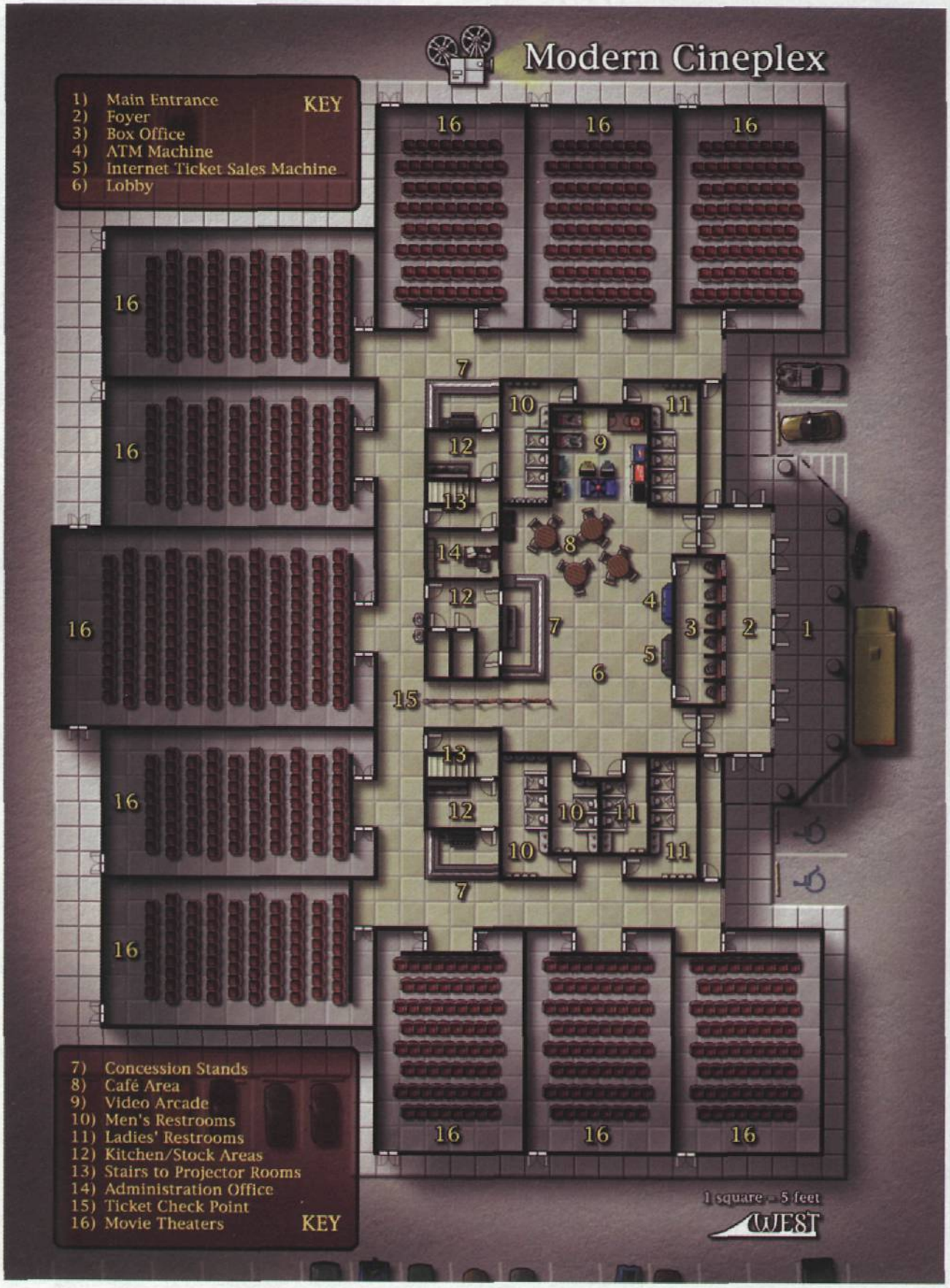
- A shocking change occurred in the Orz Aurora when it last appeared. Large drops of blood rained down on the village for an hour. (True)

- A ghost ship was found adrift in Woolly Bay. The ship was in good order, but its crew appeared to have vanished. Since the ship was towed into port, bizarre deaths and ill-luck have befallen the salvage crew. (True)

- The body of the merchant Marwyrd Relpenn was found washed up near Orz two months ago. So why was Marwyrd seen alive on Blanket Street last week? (True)

DOWNER part ten

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter.** Lettering by **Sean Glenn.** A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**

CHUNRK
DOWNER, THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM!
MY ASS! YOU SCUM KNOW WHO I AM! GUILD PRIVILEGE!
FIGHT, OR THERE'S A BOUNTY ON YER HEAD! PICK UP PAY TOMORROW AT THE HALL!
MEANWHILE...
DOWNER IS A PROVEN LOSER, BUT HE'S NO FOOL. HE'S LIKELY TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE.
HE HAS VALUABLE INFORMATION, SO KEEP HIM ALIVE. THE LITTLE SPY THAT'S OUT THERE IS ANOTHER MATTER.
ELIMINATE HIM WITH EXTREME PREDJUDICE.
HE THREATENS TO QUEER THE WHOLE DEAL.
'OLD ON GAJO. YOU'RE JUST ABOUT THE RIGHT SIZE TO GET ME OUT OF THIS PIT.
TO BE CONTINUED

Cartography by Christopher West